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Some students hide their drug use behind dorm doors
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From the editor

This issue is for you.

When I say you, I mean all of you, every student here at Kent State, every person who will pick up this magazine. After being selected as editor, I decided this would be my goal for the semester. And I think my staff has succeeded in helping me reach this goal because this issue truly has a little bit of everything.

Our cover story by Ryan Loew, “Kent’s secret stash,” is an in-depth look at students’ use of hard drugs — even in the dorms. If you’re looking for a more light-hearted read, Grace Dobush’s story about the stereotypes of librarians will entertain you but also shed some light on what library science students are really like — don’t let the stereotypes fool you. Erin Roof’s first-person narrative about coming to terms with losing her best friend and her father in the same year is both beautifully poetic and heartbreaking. If you’re not up for much reading, Gavin Jackson’s photo story on the Kent State Precision Flight Team might be just the thing for you.

I enjoyed putting this diverse issue together. I’ve learned a great deal in the process, and I had the opportunity to work with a talented and creative staff. Without them, this issue would not have been possible.

Enjoy. I’m confident you’ll find something that sparks your interest.

Katie Hilbert

Staff Fall 2005

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Amanda Chaffin teaches Joe Stepec, violin performance and English literature major, how to play a song on the piano. Chaffin says music is a huge part of her life, and she loves teaching others how to play.
College introduces students to social classes different from their own

AMANDA CHAFFIN IS LOOKING FOR a roommate for next year. Applications for rooms in residence halls have already begun, so Chaffin thought she'd sign up now and find someone to live with later.

But most of her friends already made plans to live in off-campus apartments or houses, and Chaffin can't find someone to share the dorm with her.

A friend suggests Chaffin pay for a single room, rather than live with a stranger. "I can't afford that," Chaffin replies.

Her friend shrugs it off. "Just ask your mom to pay," he says.

"I can't," she continues, to his confusion.

"Why not?"

"I live in a trailer, and my mom's on welfare," Chaffin explains.

Her friend grew quiet, looking shocked, says Chaffin, a sophomore music education major at Miami University in Oxford. Most students at Miami — a college that made The Princeton Review's top 20 list of schools lacking interaction between races and classes — don't realize her background is so different from theirs.

Chaffin walks into the tiled cafeteria and examines the choices listed on signs hanging from wrought iron, reminiscent of an old-fashioned deli. The light streaming from the skylights and warm hanging lamps is soft and flattering to the numerous dining areas filled with plush booths, diner stools and wooden tables. "Just walking in here, you can tell how much money everyone has," Chaffin says.

Most students are used to borrowing Dad's
People who belong to different classes can live their entire lives without coming in contact with a different social background.

Chaffin is not the only student who has gone to college and been exposed to an unfamiliar social class. The college years are often the only time in a person's life when he or she experiences extreme differences in culture and class, whether it's going to a rich private school or attending a working-class university.

These kinds of situations actually can be beneficial to students, says Sara S. Lee, an assistant sociology professor at Kent State. "People who belong to different classes can live their entire lives without coming in contact with a different social background."

Elementary education is divided primarily by neighborhoods, she explains, which tend to be made of people from the same class, race or ethnicity. But college usually offers a more diverse spread of people than the real world. It's a prime time for students to examine different perspectives and share their own.

"The classroom, I think, is really an opportunity for those kinds of cross-class interactions to take place," Lee says. She encourages the students in her Inequality in Society and Race and Ethnic Studies classes to take advantage of the college experience. Nowhere else are people so diverse in their backgrounds, Lee says.

Sociologists have a hard time defining social class, she says. A person's class takes into account tangible factors, such as income, as well as less concrete factors, such as prestige. Some sociologists argue that social classes don't affect a person's life, but Lee does not agree with this view. "I think it's absolutely silly to think that there aren't classes in America," she says.

Social class can shape everything from the way people speak to how they style their hair to how they relax on the weekends, Lee says. These types of things affect how people relate to one another, and it's hard to form relationships if there is a lack of common experiences.

Senior architecture major Eric Spitzer says his group of friends at Kent State includes people from all kinds of backgrounds, and they get along fine. But his days growing up in Bath were not as easy. "It was harder to fit in. Everyone thought before they got to know me," Spitzer says, pausing. "They thought I was a stuck-up, spoiled rich kid. They knew the name. They didn't know me."

Spitzer's family owns Spitzer Autoworld. The dealerships have been an Ohio institution since 1904, when Henry Ford asked Spitzer's great-grandfather to show one of the first cars in his store. Even though his high school, Revere, was filled with rich kids, Spitzer says they still looked at him differently. "I've had people date me because of it," he says. "I've had people be friends with me because they wanted stuff." Spitzer says he broke up with one girlfriend after almost two years because he learned she was dating him for his money.

This was hard for Spitzer to understand because he says he doesn't fit the upper-class stereotype. His idea of someone rich is somebody who flaunts what he or she has, and while Spitzer likes nice things, they don't dictate who he hangs out with or how he acts. Spitzer is reserved when talking about

Amanda Chaffin relaxes in her dorm room. Chaffin, who lives in a double room, says she had to have a roommate this year because she couldn't afford to live alone.
his background and money. "My parents had money and everything, but they taught us not to live by it," he says.

Having money does make some things easier. Spitzer's family paid for his education at Kent State, even though he wants to leave the family business after graduation and work in architecture. Spitzer already has run one business, a handicapped-care provider called Open Arms. Although he still volunteers in the area, Spitzer sold the business to a friend about six months ago, so he could focus on school.

But for students like Chaffin, affording college is not so easy. Until she was about 8 years old, Chaffin says she lived a typical life: a paid-off house, two cars, a dad and a stay-at-home mom. Then one day after church, the family came home to see her dad's car pulling out of the driveway.

"All his stuff was gone except a pillow and a T-shirt," she says.

Since her father had supported the family, it had not been a problem that Chaffin's mom lacked skills for the work force, she says. After he left, life became harder. The family went from place to place, living in the car, crashing at shelters or friends' homes. They even spent a few nights on the gymastics mats in the studio where Chaffin danced. "We went on welfare, the whole food stamp deal," Chaffin says, "because if we didn't, we'd be starving.

Chaffin's family now lives in a trailer park in Springfield, and she graduated co- valedictorian from her high school, Northeastern. "Even through my crazy life, I kept my grades up," she says. Chaffin's mom told her to get an education so she could always support herself. "Even through my crazy life, I kept my grades up," she says. "I just wasted $30,000," she says, imitating them. She has had to work a lot harder to get where they are, she says, and some students just don't seem to appreciate their education.

A will to work

Even if lower-income students find ways to pay for higher education, their economic status can still affect the college experience, Lee says. She graduated from Columbia University and the University of California, Berkeley. Students at Columbia and Berkeley typically have their education paid for by their families, she says. "That is a very, very different college experience from students who have to work almost full time," Lee says.

College is a time to discover one's self and expand boundaries, she says. But the students who work part- or full-time jobs may not have time to enjoy this freedom. They also have less time for homework or social activities. At Kent State, Lee says she often sees this among her students. "They work so much that they barely have the time or energy to attend classes," she says.

Cleveland native Kimberly Vargas receives scholarships to pay for all of her tuition, room and board at Harvard University, but she still works four jobs, including cleaning dormitories and conducting research, during the school year to cover outside expenses. Vargas, a psychology student, attended James Ford Rhodes High School, an inner-city Cleveland school. She never wanted to attend Harvard and applied only to make her guidance counselor happy. Then she got accepted. "You can't really say no to Harvard," she says.

Vargas says most people she knows at Harvard just call and ask their parents for money, but she works for her own.

Chaffin says she notices similar behavior at Miami. "The definition of spoiled is Miami. You don't even know," she says. "Mom, I don't like my roommate. It's OK, honey, just sign up for a double as a single, and we'll pay the extra $1,000," she mimics.

Chaffin worked at the London Dog Dairy Bar, a local ice cream and hot dog shop near her hometown, for the past two years. During

Senior architecture major Eric Spitzer says he is pursuing something other than the family business. Spitzer spends much of his time working on models in the architecture studio.

Comparing costs

| Miami University — Public |
| Tuition: $21,605 |
| Room and board: $7,610 |
| On-campus employment: about 5,000 students |

| Kent State University — Public |
| Tuition (undergraduate): |
| Ohio Resident: $7,954 |
| Out of state: $15,386 |
| Room and board: $3,220 to $5,352 |

| Harvard University — Private |
| Tuition: $29,360 |
| Overall charges will total: $51,972 |

Financial facts

Ohio received an "F" last year for college affordability, according to Measuring Up 2004, The National Report Card on Higher Education.

The proportion of family income needed to pay for a four-year college in Ohio has climbed about 30 percent in the last decade.

Ohio's average tuition for four-year public colleges in 2004 was the fifth highest in the nation.

Information from: National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education

Ohio's per-capita income is about $1,700 less than the national average, according to the Ohio Board of Regents.

— Compiled by Jessica Sprowl
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Amanda Chaffin stands outside her residence hall at Miami University. Chaffin says she loves the atmosphere at the university, but it is a big change from the trailer park she lives in while not at school.

the school year, Chaffin doesn't work, choosing instead to focus on practicing her seven instruments. The average music education major is expected to practice each instrument at least two hours a night. She also is expected to pay for instruments, music and parts, the costs of which quickly go into the hundreds of dollars. Chaffin says she wouldn't be able to do it without loans and help from her grandmother.

Kent State student Fallehn Eaton comes from a more affluent background but still wants to work for her education. The freshman business management major's mom is a sales representative, and her dad owns a real estate company. While she says both parents are well-off now, she knows what it's like when money is tight. "I remember when we didn't have money. It was awful," she says. "It was so hard. Then when my mom got her job," she pauses, thinking. "Life's easier with money.

Even though her dad paid for her education, Eaton works to pay for her own expenses and to pay him back for at least some of it. It's a decision she made on her own to be more self-sufficient.

Self-sufficiency and self-confidence are both necessary for adjusting to an unfamiliar college environment. Vargas' experiences in Cleveland keep her grounded at Harvard. She sees her friends freaking out over class work, worried because they got a C instead of an A on an exam, and she can handle it better. "I saw so many people dropping out (of high school)," she says. "I knew being here was an incredible privilege. If I did my best and still got a bad grade, it wasn't the end of the world."

Vargas says the differences in education level and culture between her high school and Harvard took some getting used to. At her high school, there was a lot of diversity, and everyone was working-class, but no one cared. At Harvard, the student body is less diverse, but people take more pride in their heritage, she says. "It's more in-your-face."

Miami is notoriously homogenous — it was named the 18th least diverse college in the nation by The Princeton Review — but Chaffin says she has found close friends outside the stereotype. Chaffin is an outgoing person, who talks to everyone she meets. She and some friends walk into the lounge of the music dorm. Chaffin sits down at the piano and begins playing a song by her favorite band, Evanescence. Within minutes, a student runs in, exclaiming his love for the song. Chaffin immediately slides over and shows him how to play it. The two exchange introductions, as he quickly catches on.

Rachel Abbey is a sophomore newspaper journalism major. This is her first time writing for The Burr.
title: don't judge these books by their covers
author: grace dobush

THIS BOOK IS DUE THREE WEEKS FROM LAST TUESDAY

INFO: HARDCORE LIBRARIANS

INFO: BLOCK ON THE BEACH

INFO: A PAIR OF META-TINIS

INFO: INFORMATION SOUR

INFO: SHEH! I SAID QUIET!

INFO: RESULT OF LAST LIBRARY BAR NIGHT

INFO: PITCHER HAPPY HOUR SPECIAL

INFO: CUTTIN A LOOOGEE
A GROUP OF ROWDY 20-SOMETHINGS has taken over one of the big picnic tables on the Zephyr Pub patio on a Tuesday night. Cocktail glasses, pitchers of beer and ashtrays begin to clutter the surface of the table but are moved aside for a few of the young people to get up on the table for a photo. A Zephyr worker who has seen it all tells them they'll have to get down after the picture.

Raucous laughter, loud talking and gossip - it seems like a completely normal scene at a college-town bar.

Completely normal, until they start comparing their collections of library cards.

It's library bar night — on a Tuesday, no less — and the Master's of Library and Information Science students are cutting loose on this brisk spring evening.

Contrary to stereotypes, most library students are not bespectacled old maids, wrapped in wool and skulking through the stacks, caressing books in place of human lovers. In fact, some of the future librarians I've met — the future leaders of summer reading programs for my future children — really know how to party.

Media stereotypes

Librarians have gotten a bad rap in movies and TV shows. If they have any spoken lines beyond shushing unruly patrons, it's often only to scold someone in a whisper.

At library night downtown, they "mostly talk about professors, and then it just gets worse," MLIS student and designated driver Monica Rice says loudly.

Before the dozen future librarians outgrew the tables at The Loft and barhopped over to the Zephyr Pub, MLIS students Cari Baker and Chris Delfosse, both 23, put songs in the jukebox — Elvis Costello, Blondie and a classic from the Police. "'Roxanne' is a drinking game. Every time they say 'Roxanne,' you have to drink. It's intense," Delfosse jokes. She has a disposable camera and is set on finishing up the film tonight.

In addition to the occasional night out at the bar, the MLIS students sometimes do bowling or movie nights. Once they watched the movie Party Girl, in which a New York nightlife queen is forced to take a job in a public library. The main character, played by Parker Posey, resists the Dewey Decimal System at first but, by the end, realizes that librarianship is her calling. The reviews of the movie were lukewarm, but "she's making the library part of her partying, and I think that's the greatest thing," Baker says.

Another example of an attempt at a positive image of a librarian was the made-
Where are they now?

Since the library bar night in the spring, most of the students in this story have graduated.

Cari Baker finished her master’s degree this summer and is now a technical services librarian at the Shaker Heights Public Library. Chris Delfosse also graduated in August and is now a librarian at East Middle School in Youngstown.

Monica Rice took a different route. She did not finish the MLIS program and is now instead a full-time youth program volunteer for the Church of the Brethren in Illinois. “I still love libraries, though,” she says.

Christopher Busta-Peck graduated in August and moved to Baltimore, where he works in the African-American department of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Walt Kneeland is still working on his MLIS degree and hopes to graduate in August or December 2006.

for-TNT fantasy film The Librarian: Quest for the Spear, starring Noah Wyle. But it failed. “It was so bad,” Baker says. Plus, “he had 22 degrees, but not one was in library science.”

A vocation for the ‘intellectually vivacious’

Richard Rubin, the director of the School of Library and Information Science, wrote the book on librarianship — literally. He’s the author of Foundations of Library and Information Science, a textbook often used in the first courses in library science programs.

 Rubin heads up what is the only accredited library school in Ohio. There are 50 to 60 accredited library schools in the United States and Canada. The number of schools declined in the last 20 years, Rubin says, but has remained stable now for a few years. Some have changed their programs to focus primarily on information technology, he says, but Kent State’s program remains focused on the library.

Kent State’s LIS program is the third largest in the United States, with about 670 students total from the Kent campus, Columbus campus and through distance learning. When Rubin was earning his master’s degree here in the 1970s, most students attended classes full time, but now about 80 percent of MLIS students are part time.

Rubin says the image of the field has changed significantly with the changes in technology. “The library itself has changed,” he says, and seeing young people working in libraries encourages other young people to consider it as a career option. “It’s a profession for people who are intellectually vivacious,” he says.

“Have you ever considered it?” he asks me, his eyes showing some mischief. Rubin wears a black suit but is approachable and friendly, with a full beard and rosy cheeks.

I realize there are many similarities between journalists and librarians. Members of both professions hold deep respect for the First Amendment, the free flow of ideas and a person’s right to know. Librarianship is more than just a job — it has a whole set of ethics to it. The word “vocation” is now often associated with blue-collar work, but it used to signify a calling, Rubin says, and that’s what librarianship is to many people.

The turnover rates in library jobs are some of the lowest — and that’s because librarians get satisfaction from their work, Rubin says. Librarians interact with people and help them, but there’s no pressure to sell a product. "There's trust between librarians and patrons," he says.

Rubin describes librarianship as a noble profession. "Ignorance is one of our enemies," he says. Librarians are professionals with a set of ethics they bring to the workplace. They must respect a person’s right to information, regardless of what they think, and they help patrons without direct benefit to themselves. People who want to become librarians “tend to be on the thoughtful side,” he says.

Future librarians

Cari Baker came to the MLIS program with a degree in English from Hiram College.

She knew she wanted to work in a library since she was a child. She began to read at the age of 2 and can remember visiting libraries since then. She read everything, exhausting children’s literature and then moving on to adult books. “I basically went through the Dewey Decimal System, starting at 000,” she says.

Baker worked at the Geauga County Public Library since she was 15, starting out as a shelver, moving up to tech services and then working in reference for two years.

When she worked as a graduate assistant for the School of Library and Information Science while she completed her master’s
degree, she only worked at the public library as a substitute.

People often don't understand what librarians do and why they need master's degrees, Baker says. A woman once asked her straight out why she needed a master's if she was just putting books in alphabetical order. "I thought that was extremely rude," she says.

The Geauga library system requires a bachelor's degree to work in reference. Some libraries require MLIS degrees, but others don't require any at all. Baker says you need an MLIS degree to be "a hardcore librarian." She recognizes that there's some elitism in saying that, but library students mean business. Library school used to be busywork, and often civilians will think being a librarian is something that's easy and certainly doesn't require a master's degree. It also doesn't help that there are many "paraprofessionals" in the field — people who work in libraries without library science degrees.

Chris Delfosse sits on Dewey, a gigantic stuffed bear wearing a plastic top hat in the Reinberger Children's Library Center on the third floor of the Kent State Library. Many of the graduate assistants come to this children's library room to work because they like the friendly atmosphere.

Delfosse's specialization is school library media. She got her bachelor's degree in 7-12 education from Youngstown State and is a licensed teacher. She loves teaching teens, but she was offered a graduate assistantship and wanted a master's degree, so she came to Kent State.

Delfosse's earliest memory of a library isn't quite what you'd picture for a future librarian. In middle school, her parents often dropped her off at the library, and she would promptly leave to go across the street to the shopping center. "The librarians were cool. They wouldn't tell on me," she says and laughs.

A little feisty

Librarians seem to have a kooky sense of humor. "Meta" is a prefix used in library science to signify "information about" something. Rice, trying to explain the meaning, points out that The Simpsons and Family Guy are TV shows that parody TV shows, so they could be called metasitcoms. The Web site librariangear.com sells a T-shirt only a librarian could love: Three shirts are drawn on it above the word "Metashirt."

Linda Absher is the creator of Lipstick-librarian.com, a tongue-in-cheek Web site for fashionistas who find themselves working reference desks. The 46-year-old is a reference librarian at Portland State University in Oregon. A lipstick librarian is able "to apply liquid eyeliner flawlessly while writing your collection development policy on the sly during a public services meeting." (And if you do, send her a picture.)

It all started in 1992, when Absher and a fellow library student at the University of California, Berkeley were imagining their futures as librarians over a few glasses of wine and pictured themselves as "hip, hilarious librarians who no one would ever think would fit the stereotype."

And then she went to her first American Library Association conference later that year and was stunned. "Over 20,000 librarians, and most of them fitting the stereotype down to their crinkled summer reading campaign T-shirts," Absher says. "It was quite a shock."

Her Web site is usually taken with a grain of salt. "Most librarians have to have a healthy sense of humor to do what we do," she says. "I did get some negative reaction on a law librarian electronic list, but that resulted in even more librarian humor sites popping up. We like to be a little feisty."

No gender discrimination allowed

When a person thinks of a librarian, the image is typically female. But men make up a substantial portion of the professional librarian pool. Of the 194,000 librarians in 2003, 16 percent were male, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Statistical Abstract.

When Rubin began teaching at Kent State in 1988, 20 percent to 30 percent of the MLIS students were men, and that's remained steady in the time he's been here, he says. Historically, as in many professions, men have primarily held management positions, even though the
A Special Message From the President

Dear Kent State Students,

As you know, I have decided to retire as president. Although it will be a while before Kent State's 11th president arrives, and although there will be many occasions for reflections and farewells in the coming months, I want to take this opportunity to share some thoughts with you. This is because getting to know, work with and serve Kent State students — from student-athletes to student senators; from associate-degree students to doctoral candidates; from lifelong locals to visitors from around the globe; and from freshmen who are members of the "Millennial" generation to senior guests who are part of the "Greatest Generation" — will always stand among the greatest privileges of my presidency.

During the course of nearly 15 years, I have seen compelling proof that Kent State students are second to none! I have been bowled over by your academic, athletic and artistic talents. I have been buoyed by your enthusiasm for learning. I have been inspired by your perseverance in juggling demanding coursework with on- and off-campus jobs. And I have had my faith in the future renewed countless times by your willingness to support meaningful causes and reach out to those in need within our campus community and throughout the world community.

I will leave this once-in-a-lifetime job with the highest regard for Kent State's student body and for the dedicated faculty and staff members who have made a Kent State diploma a passport to unlimited opportunities. I have personal evidence of that fact, as my youngest daughter found that her Kent State education was a springboard to success in a field she loves. Whatever field you have chosen to pursue, I am confident that each of you has an equally fulfilling future ahead of you. That is because despite the change in who occupies the office overlooking Risman Plaza, Kent State's commitment to student success will not change.

I will miss that bustling office and its birds-eye view of a richly diverse and wonderfully dynamic student body. I will miss regular interactions with students on every Kent State campus. But as I explore my own new path, I will continue to cheer you on as you pursue the dreams closest to your hearts, and I will look forward to hearing about your accomplishments with great Kent State pride.

With best wishes,

Carol A. Cartwright

majority of people in the field are women. In Melville Dewey's time, very smart women could be hired at half the cost of men. But the profession as a whole doesn't take the gender discrepancy lying down. "We fight it pretty hard," Rubin says.

There are more men than Baker expected in her classes, and in one class the men are even in the majority. It's an image problem, Baker says, because librarianship has been seen as a female profession for so long. When she started out as a shelver at the Geauga County Public Library, there were no men working at the library. Now her boss is a man.

MLIS student Christopher Busta-Peck, 25, finds that being male allows him to bring different background knowledge to the workplace.

But he has been addressed as "Miss" at the desk at least five times with no apology. And some people will call the library and insist on speaking with women. It all depends on the patron's prejudices and preconceptions, though: Some men will approach him before any of the female librarians.

Walt Kneeland, 24, came to the MLIS program with a bachelor's degree in popular culture from Bowling Green State University. He finds that his background gives him insight to what's popular with younger readers. When he becomes a Young Adult librarian, he thinks he'll have a better chance of being in touch with what kids want to read and not just be some adult latching on to the latest fad in children's literature. He points out the recent popularity of Harry Potter and graphic novels. "If kids are reading that, at least they're reading," he says.

Stereotypes and generation gaps
Revolution Librarians Redux, a collection of essays on librarianship, includes an article about things they should teach you in library school but don't, such as academic writing, dress and hygiene. Baker says it surprises her that some people need to be told how to dress for an interview, but it's apparent that some students need the advice. "Stereotypes exist for a reason," Delfosse adds.

Angela Neal-Barnett, an associate professor of psychology, says the repressed librarian who sheds her prim and proper
exterior by the end of the musical is a classic stereotype in American culture. People latch onto stereotypes because they’re simple. “They’re an easy way to synthesize information,” she says. Although stereotypes can be used to make judgments that adversely affect people, for the most part they are just a way for people to keep information straight.

“My dentist still gushes how she would like a job reading books all day,” lipstick librarian Absher says. “I told her if she ever found one to let me know. It seems that no matter how you come off, the public finds a lot of comfort in the stereotype. Sometimes I think I could dress in a leather corset and a pink tutu, and people would still wax poetic over how lucky I am to be surrounded by all these books.”

And even though librarians have a sense of humor about how people perceive them, it’s hard to beat the stereotype. “It’s odd to be with someone laughing about the public’s reaction to us when they’re wearing battered Birkenstocks and clutching a freebie Bowker (the U.S. agency that assigns International Standard Book Numbers) tote bag they scored from a conference five years ago,” Absher says. “I guess I shouldn’t be surprised. After all, if you saw me, your first impulse would be to ask me where to find the online catalog.”

As the beer flows at the Zephyr, so does the BS. “Some blood types absorb alcohol better, like Italian,” Delfosse says authoritatively, to the interest of her fellow librarians. “I just made that up.” She laughs.

A little later, the group discusses the rumor that Marilyn Manson played Paul on The Wonder Years. MLIS student Mike Myers teases Delfosse — “When evaluating information, consider the source.” He wags a finger at her, and she snaps a picture of him.

Grace Dobush, the spring 2005 editor of The Burr, is a senior magazine journalism major. This is her second time writing for the magazine.
WANTED: 
Residents for the Rubber City

Akron seeks young professionals for long-term relationship

Story by Ben Breier    Photos by Alliey Bender
CARS AND CABS FLY BY LIKE IN ANY other midsize city, while students and professionals roam the streets chattering with each other or on their cell phones. The city may seem vibrant and busy, but Akron is lonely — and looking for a change.

About 25,000 college graduates, 20 to 29 years old, left Ohio between 1995 and 2000, according to the Ohio Board of Regents. This loss is prompting various cities across the state, including Akron, to ask: "Are we cool enough?" In an effort to make the city more appealing and keep young people in the area, Akron hired an image consultant to suggest ways to increase the city's popularity and make it more alluring.

Rebecca Ryan is a consultant for, and founder of, Next Generation Consulting, a company that conducts research to improve communities.

Ryan was inspired to start Next Generation Consulting after observing the generational disconnect between baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) and Generation X-ers (born between the '60s and '70s), she says in an e-mail interview.

The city of Akron hired Ryan and Next Generation Consulting to provide some input about how the city can improve its image and increase traffic of 21- to 35-year-old people. Ryan says she doesn't believe Akron's image is broken, but she believes it can present itself better. She says there are "many efforts under way to do just that."

Ryan's list of suggestions to improve Akron includes developing municipal legislation to allow for outdoor dining, equipping public buses with bike racks and installing a director for the sole purpose of catering to young professionals in the Akron area.

Ryan also looked into improving the job situation for Akron, and she seems optimistic about the city's economic future.

"I know anecdotally that there are some young professionals who would like to move back to Akron and can't find work. That's too bad because Akron needs talented, young professionals to boomerang back," Ryan says. "The Chamber, mayor's office and many other partners are announcing employer relocations and expansions every year. I think Akron is going to be just fine."

Boomerangers — those who have moved away from the Akron area but would consider moving back — are a key component of Ryan's plan to strengthen the city. One of the suggestions detailed in Ryan's study involves the organization of a "Come Home to Greater Akron" campaign to attract these young professionals.
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Ask Dave Lieberth, deputy mayor of administration for Akron, what Ryan is responsible for, and it is apparent that Ryan's vision for Akron is more than skin-deep. Ryan's impact on the city is meant to be more than a quick image fix. "Part of her work was to identify what kind of jobs are going to become vacant and, also, how to attract and retain young people to get those jobs," Lieberth says. "What she really did was look at the population of young professionals in the Greater Akron area and see who could fill those jobs that could be vacant."

About 4,700 specific jobs will open up by the end of 2007, Lieberth says of Ryan's research. "There's a whole generation of baby boomers who are in the process of retiring," he says. "How are we going to fill those jobs?"

Economic issues aside, Lieberth knows that other things need to be done to motivate people to make the trek to Northeast Ohio. "The answer is not just to produce jobs," he says. "There are jobs here for young professionals. There have to be indices or some other criteria that will make your community attractive for people 21 to 35."

Lieberth seems fairly optimistic about the city and focuses on some of the perks the city already has, including nightlife, learning institutions and vitality.

**Retailers respond**

Square Records is a quaint music store that features a hodgepodge of independent rock music. Screen-printed posters from local shows adorn the store's walls, while a modest collection of used music hides in the corner.

Dave Ignizio is one of three owners who has been in charge of Square Records since the store's inception in August 2003. Hiring an image consultant isn't necessary, he says. "A consultant for cool is redundant. It's not something you can really craft. It just has to happen." In a sense, Ignizio already believes Akron is a cool place to live. "A lot of what makes Akron cool is that it isn't pretentious,"

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*Jacob Mothersbaugh, 18, of Akron, browses at Revival Thrift in Highland Square. Mothersbaugh enjoys the unique items found at Revival Thrift.*

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“You can’t make Akron cool for 20- to 30-somethings without making jobs available.”

he says. “It’s a tight-knit, midsize town. It all just comes down to the people. They are more down-to-earth than other places, and that keeps you grounded.”

This means a lot coming from Ignizio, who has lived in Washington, D.C., Cleveland and Colorado. Ignizio says he prefers Akron to the urban sprawl of Cleveland.

Like her neighbors at Square Records, Jen Michael, a young entrepreneur who opened Revival Thrift in Akron about a year ago, sees the hiring of an image consultant as unwarranted. “They should’ve talked to the people that grew up here and planned to make Akron their home. They wasted their money,” says Michael, who already feels that Akron possesses a feeling of “understated cool.”

Michael says fiscally contributing to young people in the area will be a substantial catalyst in helping the city of Akron grow and prosper. “Something has to happen naturally, but the city needs to help and give grants to young people to start businesses in the city,” she says. Revival Thrift offers the area something that wasn’t there before, Michael says. “By no means will we change Akron, but it shows young people that it doesn’t take much — just an idea.”

Students’ stances

Opinions on Akron’s current state vary among students at the University of Akron. Timothy Cole, a fifth-year secondary education major, plans on staying in Akron. “If I can get a job here, I’ll stay here,” says Cole, who has family members in Akron and a job coaching basketball in Springfield. Coaching is motivation for him to continue living in Akron. “If I weren’t coaching, it’d be highly unlikely I’d be here,” he says.

The job market is a big concern to Cole, though, who says, “Even if you’re a student who has been on the dean’s list for years, chances of finding a job are slim.”
Despite the fact that Cole believes the job market is relatively poor, he still sees a lot of good things within Akron — things that aren't blatantly obvious. "I like it. It has tradition and a strong past rooted as an industrial town," Cole says. "People can do so much here with such few resources."

Renee Messenger, senior business and organizational communications major at the University of Akron, feels differently about the city. Messenger was born and raised in Akron and loves the university, but she feels that moving away will help her in her quest to "experience a lot of things." She plans to move to the South after graduation and questions Akron's appeal. "Who wants to go to Akron to go out? Who says that? Nobody!" Messenger says with a smile and a chuckle.

On the move

Heather Houtz, who has been bartending at the Lime Spider for a year, has lived in many different cities, including Minneapolis, which she cites as a city Akron should attempt to emulate. "It's more of a melting pot, a colorblind place where everybody gets along," she says. "It has wonderful social services and a wonderful public school system compared to Ohio."

Houtz says she feels the city does little to keep University of Akron graduates in the area after they graduate. "You can't make Akron cool for 20- to 30-somethings without making jobs available," she says.

Despite these shortcomings, Houtz sees potential for Akron. "There could be hope, but you'd have to be able to raise the education level and economic status in the city to make it attractive to other people," she says. "Why would you come from a better place to a worse one?"

But for Malcolm Abram, a pop music reporter for the Akron Beacon Journal, coming to Akron did not mean moving to a worse place. Abram, who relocated for a job opportunity in the Rubber City, says, "This was the job I wanted, and this was the town that had it at the time. I've already lived in a place worse off than Akron, so, coming from there, this isn't so bad."

Ben Breier is a junior magazine journalism major. This is his first time writing for The Burr.
Slaves to the balm
Some students can’t survive without soothing their lips

Story by Leslie Schelat

FOR SOME PEOPLE, IT CAUSES ADDICTION, cravings and withdrawal symptoms that are felt within minutes of its last use.

It’s legal and available at drugstores, grocery stores, Wal-Mart and even day spas for less than $5, and no identification is required to purchase it.

But this supposedly addictive substance isn’t a drug — it’s lip balm.

“When I see someone else use some, I’m like, ‘Oh, I have to put some on,’” says Eytan Hoenig, freshman fashion merchandising major with a passion for Burt’s Bees lip balm.

Others share similar feelings of adoration for his preferred brand of balm. “Every time I pull it out, my friends want some,” Hoenig says.

Just talking about his favorite lip balm makes Hoenig’s cravings begin. Such sentiments have gathered attention from various people and companies concerned about lip-balm obsessions and addictions.

Wyeth Consumer Healthcare, the company that makes ChapStick brand lip balm, shows concern for potentially addicted ChapStick users by referring them to the company’s “Global Safety Team” for a deeper look at their problem.

Even the most frequent lip-balm users should note that ChapStick is not an addiction but rather a habit, says Fran Sullivan, spokesman for Wyeth Consumer Healthcare. “There’s nothing in ChapStick that can cause addition. Addiction is a physical reliance on something. People have habits, and one of the habits is to apply ChapStick,” he says.

Lip Balm Anonymous, a satirical Web site for self-proclaimed lip balm addicts at www.kevdo.com/lipbalm, includes product information, support programs and testimonials from users. It even provides self-evaluation to help lip balm users realize they have a problem and offers a 12-step program to deal with addictions.

Hoenig says he thinks his Burt’s Bees obsession may be genetic. “My mom orders her lip balm off the Internet,” he says. Her favorite brand of balm, MoistStic, which she used to purchase at GNC, is no longer available in the area, so she has to purchase it online. She orders 10 tubes at a time for $10 plus shipping.

Hoenig travels home to Lyndhurst to purchase his Burt’s Bees lip balm at DSW Shoe Warehouse, where it costs $2.49, as opposed to $2.69 at most places he’s found in the Kent area. “It’s the cents that matter,” Hoenig says.

Richelle Tanner, a sophomore exploratory major, may be a more casual lip-balm user, but her love for the product is still the same. “I always have to have it,” she says. “As far back as I can remember, it’s been a habit.”

Tanner’s favorite lip balm is mint-flavored ChapStick, but she also mixes it up once in a while with cherry-flavored Softlips.

She took her love for lip balm to the next level when she created a Facebook group, “Chapstick Whores,” in its honor. The group, which had 33 members in October, is “for people that are constantly putting on lip gloss or Chapstick, can’t live without a bottle of Chapstick with them at all times and even find themselves layering it on before bedtime!”

The need to reapply can be caused by the natural occurrence of licking one’s lips, Sullivan says. Or the answer to the lip-balm habit may be even simpler. “People perhaps could like the feel of having ChapStick on their lips,” he says.

Avid lip-balm user Hoenig has tried other brands but chooses to remain loyal to Burt’s Bees because he likes that it is all-natural and lasts longer than some other brands. “I’m going to say it’s the best,” Hoenig says. “That’s what everyone says who uses it.”

Leslie Schelat is a senior magazine journalism major. This is her first time writing for The Burr.
The Precision Flight Team poses for a team portrait at the Region III SAFECON.

Story and photos by Gavin Jackson
Propelled to perform

The Kent State Precision Flight Team makes a pact to soar higher during this year’s competitive season

"DOES ANYONE WANT TO ORDER PIZZA?" ASKS SCOTT HORNING, captain of the Kent State Precision Flight Team. "What should we say, ‘Have it delivered to the end of runway one-nine?’" a teammate quickly retorts. Horning, a senior flight technology major, is spending his Saturday afternoon practicing with his teammates at the Kent State Airport off Route 59 in Stow.

Sept. 9 marked the beginning of the Precision Flight Team's flight training exercises. The team has been around for more than 25 years at Kent State.

This year's team, which consists of 20 students, is preparing for the annual Region III Safety and Flight Evaluation Conference (SAFECON). Of the 20 students on the team, only 12 will compete at SAFECON. The others help out with safety events.

Richard Mangrum, assistant professor of aeronautics, has been the Precision Flight Team adviser for two years. "I was excited to see about 30 people turn out at the first meeting," he says. "(In) years past, it's been four or five."

Last year, Kent State hosted the Region III SAFECON, a competition comprised of seven ground events and four flying events.

The team fell six points short of securing the second place spot required to move on to nationals. After last year's competition, Mangrum and the team made a commitment to not let it happen again. "We intensified practices and recruited flight team alumni to help," says Mangrum about the team's improvements. "We made a plan, and there was no reason we should lose again."

This year's SAFECON took place at Western Michigan University's Airport in Battle Creek. For the first time in 19 years, the team captured the second place spot, trailing Western Michigan University by 150 points. This win advanced them to the national level of the National Intercollegiate Flying Association competition. They accomplished Mangrum's goal and had a photographer with them to document their journey.
"We made a plan, and there was no reason we should lose again."

The team practices the message drop event at the Kent State Airport. The goal of the event is to drop the "message" from the airplane and get it as close to the container as possible. At the SAFECON competition, the flight team took first, second and third place in the message drop event.

"You guys smell that? Jet fuel. I tell you, if that was a cologne, I'd wear it."

– Alan Konopka

An aerial view of the Kent State Airport in Stow on Aviation Day in September shows the vast space the airport occupies. The main runway is 4,000 feet long, and the airport handles more than 70,000 take-offs and landings each year.
To the right: Mike Fox, sophomore flight technology major, and Alan Konopka, freshman flight technology major, return after taxiing an airplane for take-off at the SAFECON event at Western Michigan University.

Below: Eric Pawloski, junior flight technology major and third-year flight team member, and Jason Bond, senior flight technology major and first-year member, look over an aeronautical chart before competing in the navigation event. The two-man team is evaluated on how accurately they follow their estimated flight plan.

Below: Flight technology majors Scott Horning, senior team captain, and Eric Pawloski, junior co-captain, prepare for take-off in Western Michigan’s multi-million dollar flight simulator. Though the flight simulator is a SAFECON event, the two were only practicing. The duo is required to demonstrate proficiency and precision by flying a given route in the simulator.

Gavin Jackson is a sophomore photojournalism major and is the assistant photo editor of The Burr.
MARY SIFTS THROUGH A PILE OF WHITE POWDER WITH A BORDERS GIFT card, rolls up a $5 bill and sends an inch-long line of heroin straight up her nose. She wipes the remaining dust from the desk.

It's a Sunday night in September in one of the residence halls, and Mary is with three friends, eating pizza and studying.

They've already smoked crack.

The friends passed a glass pipe packed with a Chore Boy, a metal scrubbing material. Mary put a piece of crack into the pipe and heated the metal until it was white hot. She inhaled, all that was left — an odorless vapor.

There is the assumption that once you smoke crack, you turn into a homeless person, one of Mary's friends says. The social stigma isn't enough to stop her, though. This is her first time trying the drug — but it's neither her nor Mary's first time doing hard drugs in the dorms.

Mary's been using hard drugs since she was 15. Now, the 19-year-old sophomore education major is doing more drugs than ever. She asked that her real name not be used for this story.

For Sunday night, Mary brought the heroin from home. The crack had to be bought off campus. She didn't know where the place was, but she went with a friend to an apartment to get the drug that Sunday night. As usual, it was a friend of a friend, she says.

While there, she waited in the living room of the stranger's home. "He had like canned food all over the floor," she says. "You could tell this guy was a crackhead." A 350-pound stranger came through the door, she says. After a few minutes, he left. "Buying crack is always scary," Mary says. "It's always sleazy people."
After what seemed like an eternity, they paid $50 for a “shady” bag of crack and left. Mary didn’t even want the crack — that was for her friends. She was happy with the heroin they had for that night. But she also bought meth and, by the next day, it was all gone. “We’ve already smoked crack, done meth, smoked weed, been drunk and done heroin, and it’s only Monday,” she says. “What else is there?”

**Enforcing drug laws**

Every university has students who are using illegal drugs, says John Peach, chief of the Kent State Police Department, and the extent of such usage is not always known. “The overall drug picture is whatever you have in your community is what’s available to students,” he says.

And that means everything from marijuana to methamphetamines. “Portage County itself has just about every drug you can imagine in it,” says Lt. Bill Shanafelt of the Kent State Police Department. Marijuana is by far the most common drug among Kent State users, Peach says. He puts the amount of hard drug users at the university at a “very low percentage.”

Drug abuse violations were the only crimes that increased at Kent State last year, according to the 2004 Campus Crime Act Statistics, Peach says. In 2003, the Kent State Police Department issued 71 total drug-related charges. In 2004, there were 91, and 69 were in residence halls.

Shanafelt, who was a member of the Western Portage Drug Task Force for nine years, says the police department works closely with the university’s residence services staff and security guards to enforce drug laws. He even burns marijuana for security staffers to train them to recognize the scent, so they can catch drug use in the residence halls.

Peach says no residence hall has a bigger drug problem than another, but drug abuse is cyclical, flaring up and then dying down after police use undercover officers to make busts. “We go to where we find the biggest disruption to the safety of campus,” Peach says.
Of the 24 officers in the Kent State Police Department, only a small percentage of their time is spent making arrests for drug abuse. Few students "are wrapped up in the drug scene," on campus, Shanafelt says. "Dopers, dealers and users are very secret," he says. "And you can't be very secret living in dorms."

Most of the drugs are purchased off campus, says Lt. Michelle Lee of the Kent Police Department. But just how much drug trafficking goes on in the city of Kent is largely unknown from police records. "I'm sure it's bigger than what we think," she says. "We're only catching a small percentage."

The city police follow much of the same enforcement procedures the campus police follow, Lee says, by using plain-clothes officers to make periodic busts. But enforcing drug laws is not a routine or substantial part of their workday.

A phone call away

Drug abuse in Kent is a "huge problem" for the community, says Deborah Neuhart, emergency services manager for Townhall II, a counseling service and medical clinic at 155 N. Water St.

According to data from Townhall II's Emergency Services Department, 115 people called Townhall II's 24-hour helpline reporting heroin abuse between Oct. 10, 2004, and Oct. 9, 2005. The previous year, the center received two calls concerning heroin use. Counselors have no way of knowing why such an increase occurred, Neuhart says. "We lag behind in what's actually going on in the community," she says. "Once it starts to be a problem, then it comes across our radar."

Alcohol, marijuana and crack are the three main drugs that people are seeking treatment for now, but that may change next year, she says.

From 2004 to 2005, 24 people called the center reporting marijuana use. The highest number of calls, 128, were from people reporting problems with alcohol.

Alcohol is the main drug Townhall II deals with, says Rob Young, an outpatient services manager for Townhall II, but drugs like heroin remain a concern. "Heroin and the opiate use has increased," Young says. "We still are getting more folks that are getting an opiate or heroin addiction."

'Dibble and dabble'

"If I want it, I can get it," Mary says. "You know who does drugs. All you have to do is say, 'I want some coke. Do you want some coke?' All you have to do is mention it, and they're like, 'Yeah.'"

For Mary, hard drugs followed her to college from high school. She started doing drugs like Ecstasy and cocaine when she was 15. The following year she tried meth. "And I did everything else when I was 18," she says.

Mary admits that her Sunday-through-Monday drug binge is hard on her body, but she says she only does that much every four months. "My nose will hurt for the next three weeks," she says. "You wake up, and you can barely talk because your lungs are weak."

She says she smoked tobacco for four years, and then she just stopped. She's not...
The effects of experimentation

Some students might experiment with drugs for the mental escape, but it’s not the most common reason they use drugs, says Dr. Bob Taraszewski, an associate professor of internal medicine at NEOUCOM. “Stimulants are popular now,” he says. “This is a big shift from the ’70s when students were walking around semi-stoned. Back then, it was more of an escape from war and protests. Now, instead of base jumping and cliff diving, people are going for an easy rush.”

Taraszewski says many people experiment with drugs because of the high they get while on them. “The number one thing all drugs have in common is the euphoric rush, the level of excitement that you can’t get physically,” he says. “Part of the motivation is to get that rush.”

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, frequent drug users can develop serious mental and physical illnesses. NIDA reports that abusing these substances alters brain functions, which can result in habitual drug cravings and uses.

“I see people that use everything,” says Mary Carol Kennedy, an advanced practice psychiatric nurse at Mayview State Hospital in Pittsburgh. “I see heroin and methamphetamine users; nothing is left out.”

Despite the side effects these drugs have on users, Taraszewski says one of the main things drugs destroy is memory. “The drugs really do a job on actually burning memory,” he says. “You burn out your best memory and lose your short-term and intermediate memory.” In addition, users can have problems learning and virtually fry their learning capacity.

Twelve percent of Kent State students have used cocaine at some point in their lives, as reported in a 2004 campus-wide survey sponsored by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services and the U.S. Department of Education. In addition, 13 percent of Kent State students reported they have tried MDMA, better known as Ecstasy, at least once.

After consistent use, Taraszewski says, medical complications are likely to occur. “Using cocaine causes your heart rate and blood pressure to rise,” he says. “If you take a high enough quantity, you hyper-perceive things, such as seeing colors brighter and hearing sounds louder.”

NIDA also reports that repeatedly binging on high doses of cocaine can make a person irritable, restless and paranoid. High doses of the drug also can lead to paranoid psychosis, where the user can experience auditory hallucinations and does not know what is going on in his or her surroundings.

Kennedy says the effect cocaine has on a person varies. “It’s kind of individual,” she says. “There is lots of depression with people who use stimulants, especially cocaine. There also are memory deficits with the short-term memory and the loss of ability to do (various) things.”

Although students may believe drug use can be identified through physical appearance, Kennedy says the most noticeable changes are the mental consequences. “What you notice more is the behavior changes,” she says. “These vary depending on age and what they use.”

Like cocaine, NIDA reports the use of Ecstasy can lead to a wide array of health problems, including those associated with cocaine.

Using Ecstasy regularly can cause brain functions to change, NIDA reports. It can cause depression because it alters the functions of serotonin, a communication chemical in the brain. Altering serotonin can lead to changes in mood, sexual activity, sleep, aggression and sensitivity to pain.

Taraszewski says he believes students sometimes think nothing bad can happen to them. “They get this false sense of security, this feeling of invincibility, that nothing can hurt them and the future’s bright,” he says. “But it is only a bigger gun to play Russian roulette with.”

Kennedy says there is treatment available for addiction. “People should be very hopeful because treatment does work,” she says. “Some young people feel there isn’t hope for them because they haven’t had experiences in life where they have failed and recovered. Students should realize that treatment works, and they should feel a sense of recovery. People can recover. Help yourself, and then help another.”

— Katie Alberti
too concerned about addiction. "Not that I'm cocky — it's definitely in the back of my mind," she says. "I like to think that I keep myself in safe situations and surrounded by good people. I think addiction comes when you only want to hang out with people who want to do drugs with you. I give a shit about not getting addicted and what I'm going to do in the future."

Mary spends about $50 a month on drugs, "depending on my pot smoking," she says. "I think the older students, like juniors and seniors that live off campus, probably do it more than freshmen," she says. "As you get older, your mind gets opened up to a lot of things."

To Mary, even the definition of "hard drugs" among young people is blurring. Mary estimates that about one out of three pot smokers does cocaine.

Ryan, a 22-year-old philosophy major who asked that his last name not be used, estimates about 25 percent of his friends use hard drugs. How much a person is affected by those drugs varies, though. "It really depends on the person," he says. "Pills and coke rarely affect me. I don't feel very different when I take them. But I see people who have taken it to a level that could definitely be defined as hardcore."

As those students get more involved in hard drugs, Peach says, it becomes harder and harder for them to focus on academics. "A few of them may want to try it, but they won't stay students very long," Peach says. "You can't (stay) as a student with those kinds of drugs."

Mary says she maintains a 3.2 grade point average and has 15 credit hours of classes this semester. "Doing drugs is different than letting it take control of your life," she says. "Yeah, if you let it take control of your life, then you won't be a student long, but if you just dabble and dabble, you're fine." It becomes a problem when someone does hard drugs week after week, she says, especially during the school week. "If you're doing coke or uppers, you're not going to sleep," she says. "Drugs take such a toll on your brain."

Mary also has experienced plenty of scary situations from doing drugs — usually involving Ecstasy. At a rave about four years ago, she says she was handed an Ecstasy pill and was having a good time until she began to reach the height of her high. "A peak on a roll always makes me puke," Mary says. "I just remember, I'm in this upstairs bathroom. I'm puking. I couldn't even get it in the toilet. I was just thinking, I'm gonna overheat. I'm going to die. Anytime I thought I was overdosing, it was from Ecstasy," she says. "Some people can handle it. I just can't."

Mary also worries about meth. "Crystal meth is seriously like an 'under-the-sink' drug," she says. "It's always scary for me 'cause I'm allergic to medicines. How do I know they didn't cut that with a penicillin pill?" she says.

**Taking a break**

By mid-October, Mary is ready for a break. She does drugs every couple of months, she says, and now is her downtime. "You gotta be responsible," she says. "If you plan on doing it every week, that's how it becomes a problem. It should never rip a friendship apart, never ruin your night if it's not there. If you're being disappointed because you can't get it, you should really stop and think about what your priorities are. You need to think about whether you have a problem or not."

Mary says she takes time off from the drugs, doing a small amount here and there when offered. She isn't stopping altogether. And if people want to judge her, she says, they'll have to try it for themselves.

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Lt. Bill Shanafelt of the Kent State Police Department shows a box of pictures, confiscated drugs and other paraphernalia collected from students on and off campus. The items now are used for classroom demonstrations about different types of drugs.

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Ryan Loew is a junior newspaper journalism major. This is his second time writing for The Burr.

“Dopers, dealers and users are very secret. And you can’t be very secret living in dorms.”
The Electric Café Co. provides students and the community with an eclectic nightspot.

IRV TERZIC’S LAST DAY AS A KENT State student was May 4, 1970. “I was in a business administration class when some girl ran in and said, ‘They shot our brothers and sisters,’ ” Terzic says. After that day, he never returned to school.

Instead, Terzic started to work for Ford Motor Company, climbing his way up the corporate ladder to quality coordinator.

It’s about 9:30 on a Tuesday night in September more than 35 years later. Terzic, 55, of Fairlawn, is standing in front of the Electric Café Co. on 252 N. Water St., putting his guitar in the back of his black sport utility vehicle — a Ford, of course. He just finished playing a set of ’60s and ’70s songs with his group inside the ECC, a weekly tradition they started at the beginning of August. “We come and jam out,” he says. “For a bunch of old fogies, we try hard.”

The group, which has no name, is made of three friends and the occasional guest. Together they play a variety of cover songs, which change every week. The group, at its core, features two guitars and vocals. Its set list “all depends on who shows up.”

Terzic says he enjoys playing at the ECC and having the ability to play with a number of different people and crowds. The ECC is the type of place that allows for an amalgamation of personalities and tastes. Patrons range in age from 18 to 55 and sometimes older. This open, easygoing atmosphere creates the quirky community that convenes inside the ECC and establishes the bar’s personality.
Parsley Flakes members Jeff Teebs, senior geography major, and Maria Jenkins, senior fine arts major, perform for a crowd at the ECC Sept. 13. Parsley Flakes was one of five musical acts that performed at the benefit show. All donations were given to Hurricane Katrina relief.

To the left: The audience responds enthusiastically to Parsley Flakes’ performance at the Hurricane Katrina benefit show.

DJ Damo, aka Doug Shafer, of Kent, spins at the ECC on Oct. 3. DJ Damo is a regular performer at the bar and a 1999 electronic media graduate of Kent State.

Mark Mandelbaum, junior marketing and business administration major, Tracy Tucholski, sophomore journalism major, Paul Eaton, sophomore advertising major, and Brett Zupaa, of Macedonia, crowd around Blitz, as he performs at the benefit show Sept. 13.
Raising the bar

Walk into the bar on any night and find an assorted crowd and a distinct experience. The ECC is different from its neighbors, Panini's and Fat Jimmy's. Inside, on the right, a bar is stocked with domestic and imported beers, along with soda and coffee. On the left, a wall is filled with local art. Past the bar, a blue suede couch surrounds much of the open floor. Small tables and stools line the opposite wall to the stage.

People of all ages and styles fill the seats. A band or disc jockey is often on the stage, and everybody listens intently or talks with friends. Owner Joel Jacobson, 34, usually can be seen moving from group to group, serving drinks behind the bar or making sure no technical problems arise. He stands just under 6 feet tall and has dark brown hair that he has to brush back from his eyes. He seems to have the intensity of a 6-year-old boy playing right field, picking daisies. Even though everyone doesn't know each other, all are welcome in the ECC's comfortable atmosphere.

This atmosphere is what Jacobson had in mind when he created the ECC under its first name: Electric Community Center. His hope was that the ECC would be a place for multimedia production and hanging out in general. In fact, he likes to call the ECC "a public house for the 21st century."

The long road to the current ECC began in October 2003 when Jacobson was attending Kent State for his master's degree in liberal studies. His focus was on community development and technology. Through independent investigations, Jacobson came up with the original idea for the Electric Community Center. "It'd be a hip place," he says.

His idea was to work with area agencies to set up a mentoring program for at-risk teens to work at the center, putting together a multitude of presentations and interacting with others. Potentially, there would have been the ability to collaborate with the university on a work-study program.

Through talking to community members and other agencies, Jacobson says he began to realize that operating as a nonprofit center was next to impossible because the operating money just wasn't available. So when the current location was rented to him at a low price, he decided to turn it into a bar. "I knew I had to do something," Jacobson says. He obtained a beer license and became an incorporated company, changing the former ECC name. "If I could make money, then I would afford myself the opportunity to serve the community," he says.

Jacobson has worked with youth groups in the past, and the new ECC has served as a sort of gathering place for college students — and anyone else for that matter — since he opened it in spring 2005.

Jacobson says nightly attendance at the bar is rising. "I'm not quite where I want to be yet," he says, of his aspirations for the bar. "I'm still growing."

Sometimes, Jacobson sits on the bench in front of the bar, and passers-by stop to talk to him. It seems that this laid-back man knows everyone in Kent. The people walking by aren't just acquaintances, though. They're friends of Jacobson's, and they can be seen hanging out in the bar on any given night.

Although this conglomeration of people contributes to the ECC's appeal, other features help set it apart from other bars in the area. For example, Jacobson says, the ECC was

"I like the ECC because it's probably the most independent place in Kent."
“It’s very mellow. I like the art.”

the first bar in Kent to offer wireless Internet. Other regular happenings include a monthly art show and various fundraising events.

The ECC hosted a benefit for Hurricane Katrina victims Sept. 13, and five area musical acts performed. Hip-hop groups split the bill with jam bands and progressive rock groups. Unicron, Parsley Flakes, Goose, Blitz and MC Homeless each took the stage that night.

People wearing Blitz T-shirts mingled with others sporting pink Mohawks and multiple piercings. Some bar-goers even donned special attire for the occasion. "I have a costume for tonight," says Matt Greenfield, a 22-year-old junior applied conflict management major. Greenfield, better known as MC Homeless, arrived as a devil with a pitchfork. "I like the ECC because it’s probably the most independent place in Kent," he says.

The hurricane benefit shows just how different yet connected the crowd that inhabits the ECC really is. Their unity is evident during Blitz’s performance. "I’m just out here to have fun," Blitz says on stage in between songs and crowd-involved chants. "Five fingers in the air means nothing. We clench to a fist, and we all mean something. So you and I gotta get involved."

Mixing it up

Every night at the ECC lends itself to a different experience. From movies to dancing to potluck dinners, the bar is constantly reinventing itself. Steven Rericha, a 2003 Kent State graduate, summed up the ECC's appeal on a night while working as a DJ. "It’s kind of a hippie place, I guess," he says. The people who inhabit the bar lean back on the couch,
hunch on their stools or stand entranced by the film being shown on the wall: Baraka, a film that explores 24 countries and cultures by dropping into each one for a moment. Bar patrons nurse their various drinks and get lost in the music and the visuals.

On a lazy Sunday afternoon in September, the vibe inside the ECC is much different. Owner Joel Jacobson hurries from the front to the back of the bar, preparing the room for his guests, who will arrive shortly for a potluck dinner.

Officially, the dinner is serving as a closing for an art exhibit. Paintings and pictures from Kent-area artists hang from the wall, and some of those artists and other ECC-regulars enter the bar with a variety of picnic food. "I got some wicked chili," says Richard Meara, a 21-year-old senior political science major and member of the band Unicron. Meara and his band have been around the ECC since it opened, and he enjoys spending time there. "This is the best place to hang out," he says.

For Ashley Besett, a 19-year-old Kent resident, hanging out is reason enough to stop by. "It's very mellow," she says. "I like the art." The ECC has a relaxed feel, and Jacobson says there has yet to be a fight at the bar, which helps people feel safe.

At the potluck dinner, the bar was not crowded. No band or DJ played, and alcohol was sparse. But booze, music and rowdy crowds aren't what personify the bar. The easygoing people who inhabit it epitomize the sense of community felt within. This crowd, this feeling, is what Joel Jacobson had in mind when he opened the ECC.

Seth Roy is a junior newspaper journalism major. This is his first time writing for The Burr.
Rebuilding the beauty
How the loss of my father and best friend helped me grow

Story by Erin Roof

Photos by Amy Mitten

FOR 21 YEARS I HAVE BEEN BUILDING this façade — nailing down boards, shaping clay and packing gauze into my holes. I crafted these walls through years of dedication and hid myself deep inside its tomb of false security. I pulled on ropes to make myself smile and operated dusty bellows to repeat the phrase “I am OK” to anyone who asked.

I used to think it sounded lifelike.

My rotted, oak planks gave way in April. My stone skin shattered. It now lies in heaps of knife-like shards that surround me. Today I have no protection, and I fear I cannot hide.

I am lying on my living room floor, listening to “Marquee Moon” by Television. I am crying — at first because I realize how beautiful this song is. It is so beautiful, I decide, that it replaces “Tomorrow Never Knows” by the Beatles as the song I want to listen to as I die.

I remember/how the darkness doubled. I recall/lightning struck itself.*

I have been obsessed with death ever since I received a warbling phone call from my grandmother. I could immediately tell something was very wrong.

“Oh, honey,” she said, “your daddy’s dead.” I hung up the phone. And the world stopped turning.

Lyrics from the song “Marquee Moon” © 2005 by Television used with permission from Verlaine Music.
Erin’s father’s wish was to be cremated and to have his ashes spread in a special place. Erin kept a small portion of her father’s ashes in this urn necklace.

Four months later, I found my mother crying on my doorstep. I knew instinctively, and routinely, this meant someone else was dead. This time it was my best friend.

“Devin was killed last night,” she said. “Drunk driving.”

I wasn’t surprised. I am always waiting for the piano to fall from the sky.

With the blinds tightly closed and my eyes wide open, I am thinking of my boyfriend. He tells me the moment before you die your brain floods itself with hallucinogenic DMT. The whole experience, he says, is supposed to be a peaceful, psychedelic trip.

“There is no reason to be afraid. Dying doesn’t sound so scary,” I think to myself as the music blares but fails to numb me.

I decide this moment — me, alone, staring at my ceiling — feels so elegantly real, it deserves to be my last. I picture myself taking off my clothes, slipping into my bathtub and slitting my wrists.

“Marquee Moon” is 9 minutes and 58 seconds long. I reason this is enough time to bleed to death...

Well a Cadillac / it pulled out of the graveyard. Pulled up to me / all they said get in.

As I struggle to deal with the deaths of my father and my best friend, I have nearly lost myself. I feel the tears stripping away years of old paint and discolored lacquer. Grief has worn me down to my smallest components and forced me to build back my beauty and my true self.

My rebuilding process has made me look at myself clearly for the first time in my life. I have always been a perfectionist. I have to be the smartest, the prettiest, the most talented, the most successful, the most outgoing. I won’t even get into how enraged with jealousy I still become when I meet someone with a better record collection than I have. Thank God I have almost all the Adam Ant albums.

I have never been comfortable letting any-
one see any weakness in me. No one can see
me cry. No one is allowed to have any inkling
that I am not as strong as I pretend to be. But
grief won’t let me hide my feelings anymore.
For the first time, I cannot ignore the pain in
my life. I am forced to deal with it because
this strange sickness is so overwhelming.

With Devon, grieving is easier, despite her
dead being more shocking than my father’s.
She turned 20 just two weeks before a drunk
driver killed her. I think, by the time she died,
I was so familiar with tragedy that I could
wade through any crisis with my eyes closed.
Still, I mourn the future we were supposed
to have together. She said we would be best
friends forever. We even bought the neck-
laces in junior high that proclaimed this. She
was “best,” and I was “friends.” I thought this
would always be true.

I promised she could be the maid of honor
in my wedding. But if we were still single at
40, we said we would turn lesbian and get
married. It made sense, since we already loved
each other deeply.

I could never tell if she was just joking
about the idea — or if she knew how serious
I was.

I loved her so much.

Going to her funeral was one of the most
difficult experiences of my life. I liked to
imagine she was on vacation at some elegant
location — that she wasn’t gone forever, just
until she got a good tan. But as I stood in
line waiting with old friends and forgotten
classmates, I began to realize how painfully
permanent Devon’s death was.

There will be no more 2 a.m. phone
calls. No more sleepovers. No more “best
friends forever.”

No more Devon.

It took all my strength to walk through
the parlor’s doors. I wanted to run away
as fast as I could. I wanted to run until she
wasn’t dead anymore.

Inside, the room was crowded with so
many of Devon’s family and friends I could
hardly turn around. Everyone was bumping
into each other in awkward silence.

It was a sea of Kleenex.

Then, through my tears, I saw my best
friend in her casket. She was wearing the
necklace I gave her for her 18th birthday. I
never dreamed when I picked it out that this
would be the last time she would wear it.

I’ve noticed at funerals that people always
comment about how nice the dead person
looks. This is never true. But I could tell the
mortician did her very best with Devon. She
curled her hair beautifully and tried to cover
the damage from the wreck. She tried to make
Devon look peaceful.

But her lips were all wrong. They were stiff
and flat — not like the lips that would part to
take up half her face in a mischievous smile.
These were not the lips that told me jokes and
secrets and dreams.

This was a stranger. This was not my
best friend.

I wanted her back.

But part of me wanted to join her.

As much as it hurt to listen to the pastor
speak about Devon’s death, I sat loathing the
moment when she would finish, and I would
walk out and never see my friend again. As
I filed past her casket one last time, I wanted
to scream out loud. I wanted to crawl up next
to Devon and hold her and will her back to
life. I wanted to tell her she couldn’t leave me
because it just hurt too much.

But I couldn’t do that. So I just touched
her hand and cried.

Erin takes a stroll down memory lane,
looking at photos of her and her
best friend, Devon, in high school. She
lost Devon to a drunk driving accident
this summer.
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The only reason I knew I was still alive was because the pain was so strong it immobilized me. Some days it took hours just to get out of bed.

Life in the hive puckered up my night/The kiss of death, the embrace of life.

The difference between grieving for Devon and my father is that Devon comforts me with all of the good memories we made together. I think about the gossiping, the laughing and, oh God, the mint green eye shadow. Yes, we were not exempt from those first tragic experiments with makeup. I have the photos to prove it. Devon and I are lying on my bed smiling the cheesiest grins, with a pound of Wet 'n Wild cosmetics between us, for all posterity to cringe at.

Those are precious photographs. I hope there is a heaven for Devon to enjoy. And I hope she is up there quaffing margaritas as the freshest newly waxed male angels lie at her feet — the ones with the BIG wings.

Back here on this little planet, I clutch these photographs and cry. I think of these memories, and I become so sad. But at the same time, I am so thankful I was blessed to have her in my life at all. Every second I spent with this amazing woman was a blessing.

For my father, grieving is much different. In the days after his death, my mother and I were showered with goodwill. There were many loving meals, many bouquets and many cards. I hated getting cards. They never said the right thing: "Though you are sad your loved one cannot be with you now, may you be comforted with all of the pleasant memories you shared...."

Hallmark obviously never met Ronald Roof. Thinking of our past only brought me pain.

My father drank himself to death. As I grew up, I watched him push everything out of his life but his addiction. He lost his job, his wife, and, to much extent, his only child to make room for his one true love: alcohol.

When I think about his death, I am pulled to opposite poles. I am as sad he is dead as I am happy he can never hurt me again.

Most days, when we still lived together, I could hold my breath from the time he walked through the door from work to when I heard the crack of his beer can opening.

Weekends were the worst. He would start drinking as soon as he woke up, sometimes

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**University Linked Active Adult Communities**

Baby boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, are once again redefining America as the wave of the largest age segmented population in history continues to mature.

This time the impact is being felt by the housing market. In response to a generation that values staying active and having multiple choices, a new breed of housing and communities are being created. New active adult (55+) communities accommodate the beliefs, values, and changing needs of the boomers.

Active adult communities provide boomers with many of the amenities they currently enjoy in their suburban single-family homes, without the hassle of home maintenance and yard work. For community residents still employed full or part time, 55 + communities support a full lifestyle by providing a myriad of onsite, easily assessable leisure activities.

An underlying philosophy of wellness prevails, reinforced by community amenities providing several exercise, fitness, and recreational opportunities while promoting social interaction, and a sense of community. Community amenities provide opportunities for residents to have fun...a culture that most boomers and recent empty nesters, having paid their dues, embrace.

So where are these communities? Boomers, unlike their parents who fled to the Sun Belt, are opting to stay in areas where they already live, remaining close to family, and maintaining the social, business, and religious affiliations they have developed throughout their lives.

The newest surge of active adult communities is in university towns. Boomers, recalling the social and academic rewards of their college years, are looking to reside in vibrant communities, where lifelong learning prevails. University linked communities support a rich selection of intellectual, cultural, athletic, and volunteer opportunities. This pairing of active adult communities and universities also generates count less financial and non-financial benefits for the university. University linked communities are a source of financial contributions, university volunteers, guest lecturers, and audiences for school activities. Most linked communities target alumni, and current and retired faculty thereby assisting the university with maintaining relationships with these important school supporters.

Once again Kent State University displays its pioneering spirit by affiliating with The Laureate Community, currently in development. For more information about The Laureate, please see our ad located on the front inside cover.
It's not uncommon for people to be confused when losing a loved one, and the loss can cause them to think about their own mortality and spirituality, says Tracey Loye, assistant director of the Psychological Clinic in Kent Hall. Students should seek help if the loss causes feelings of panic, anxiety, guilt or depression months after the death. These feelings may impair functioning in day-to-day life. Students can find help for grieving at Psychological Services in DeWeese Health Center, the Counseling and Human Development Center in White Hall or the Psychological Clinic.

The university doesn't have one overarching policy for students who are in the process of bereavement, says Sheryl Smith, associate dean of students and director of the Center for Student Involvement. Everything is done on a case-by-case basis. Attendance policies and deadlines are set by individual professors.

For students who are choosing to withdraw from Kent State, Smith or Greg Jarvie, dean of students and student ombuds, can assist with that process.

If students choose to withdraw, they must contact their academic college and file a university exit form, Jarvie says. Students also may appeal for a tuition refund through the Bursar's Office or Jarvie's office, if the student can't be present.

Another option is taking an incomplete for a course, if there are fewer than three weeks left in the semester, Jarvie says. This option allows students to complete their work after the semester ends.

Services at the Counseling and Human Development Center and the Psychological Clinic are free to Kent State students. Psychological Services charges a nominal fee and will work with a person's insurance provider.

Counseling and Human Development Center: 330.672.2208, 325 White Hall
Psychological Clinic: 330.672.2372, 303 Kent Hall
Psychological Services: 330.672.2487, second floor of DeWeese Health Center

— Laura Hanna

Erin looks at a photo of her best friend, Devon, and herself taken before a high school dance. Listening to "Marquee Moon" by Television helps Erin grieve the loss of her father and best friend.
as early as 8 a.m. First beer, then whiskey, then he would yell at my mother and me in an alcoholic rage all evening.

He rejected me. He sat as a lump on the couch through my life. He rarely raised his sight to me, except to verbally sting me. Certainly not to say, “I love you.”

He was far from an ideal father. Yet, even as he was in and out of the hospital for alcoholism-related illnesses, I never left him. When he would call me, fear stunning his voice after vomiting blood, I would rush in to see him. He would say he was going to commit suicide, and I would talk with him for hours, desperately searching for the words that would keep him alive.

“Dad, don’t you love me enough to stay alive?” I would ask him.

“No,” he would reply, shaking his head vacantly.

After he died, these dusty nightmares rained on me. All of the bad memories I trained myself to forget now haunted me. And all the pain that as a little girl would keep me awake at night praying was suddenly so real again. I couldn’t breathe. I couldn’t move.

I felt dead, just like him. The only reason I knew I was still alive was because the pain was so strong it immobilized me. Some days it took hours just to get out of bed.

As the child of an alcoholic, I learned quickly how to be self-sufficient. I learned not to trust in or need anyone. But after my father died, I realized I could not heal myself. I spent my entire life trying to ignore the pain of my father’s systematic breakdown of my emotions. I spent so long trying to survive day-to-day life with him that I had no time to fix myself. I didn’t know how.

I decided to see a therapist to teach me how to rebuild my life. The first time we met, I felt like I was on an examining table. It felt like she held me down with pins and needles and shined a bright light on me, like the doctors did the day I was born. I came out with my umbilical cord wrapped around my neck. They thought I was going to die. Funny — I didn’t feel that way until right now.

Then the Cadillac puttered back into the graveyard. And me/I got out again.
Over time, I learned how to cope and how to let go. I don't know if grieving ever really ends, and I doubt the pain of losing my loved ones will ever truly stop. I just know there is some solace in acceptance. I know my real father was dead long before his physical body collapsed. What was left was a walking disease, a suit of scars incapable of reason or compassion. It was not the person my mother married nor the man my father wanted to become.

Ronald was just a series of bad decisions, just like the one Devon made when she climbed on the back of a motorcycle with a drunken man. There have been many times I wish I had been there to pull her away from him and many times I have been thankful that the driver, too, died that night. But I can't change the past. I can only move forward.

Rebuilding is a slow process. I still get caught up in the sadness of my past. There are still many days when my biggest feat is getting out of bed. Sometimes suicide still lurks in the back of my brain, but it does not consume me. Devon and the angels will have to wait.

Little by little, I am becoming stronger. I am clawing my way out of depression and stitching back my skin, weaving in old memories — the good and the bad.

Grief helped me grow. It has shown me what I am capable of and made me proud of how far I have traveled. I feel like a new woman. I feel more complete and wise beyond my years.

My new legs are now walking away from death. My new eyes can see situations clearly. My new hands clutch old photographs and lift the needle from the record machine.

Erin Roof is a senior magazine journalism major. This is her second time writing for The Burr.
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theBURR I Fall 2005
For some multiracial students, college becomes a time to discover their heritages and shape their identities.

HER DARK HAIR IS PULLED BACK IN BRAIDS, LEAVING HER FACE OPEN, TWO large, dark eyes peering out from long eyelashes. Her skin is a warm almond color. Her ethnicity is hard to put a finger on. She could pass as Hispanic or Native American.

Jalayna Nadal, freshman Latin American studies major from Edinboro, Pa., is both. Her father is black and Cherokee, and her mother is Puerto Rican and white.

Developing her multicultural identity has been a lifelong process for Nadal, and college is a time to further explore her multiple heritages, shaping her cultural identity as she learns more about herself and her roots.

For biracial and multiracial students like Nadal, college may prove both exciting and difficult. Mixed-race students in particular can experience an intense desire to discover their heritages and create their racial identities, but they also can feel pressure to define themselves. For the first time, students are searching for identities outside the environment in which they were raised, without the constant support of family.

Although Nadal now lives her life following Native values, she wasn’t born into her Native culture. In a white, rural town, her family lived a typical American life. But when she was 5, her brother’s friend, Eagle Boy, invited the Nadals to attend Native events, such as sweat lodges.

It took years for Nadal to feel at home in the Native Cherokee culture. She thought the ceremonies were stupid. The children were suspicious of outsiders and were slow to open up to her. But when she returned year after year, they began to accept her, and she adopted the Native path. “I started really falling into the culture,” Nadal says. “It impacted me. What I take from it is honor and dignity.”
Story by Jessica Rothsruh
Photo illustration by Clarissa Westmeyer
Photos by Lauren Arendt
At Kent State, Nadal celebrates her Native culture by incorporating it into each day. Her belief in living a life of honor became the subject of her first college paper, and the Native theme of order is reflected in daily rituals. For example, when she sees an animal, especially a bird of prey, such as a hawk or eagle, she lays down tobacco and says, "Aho mitakuye oyaasin." It’s like saying a prayer for that animal because it is a part of creation, and the creator made it; Nadal says. It means ‘all my relatives; or ‘we are all related’ in the Lakota Sioux language, which Nadal learned from a family friend.

Even brushing her teeth reminds Nadal of her Native path. She rinses her mouth four times because four is a recurring number in life — four seasons, four directions, four colors of people.

But college can be a difficult place for some students to connect with their culture. For junior Spanish major Ikaika Isaacs, coming to Kent State from Virginia Beach, Va., meant becoming further detached from his cultural heritage. Isaacs, whose mother is white and father is Hawaiian, Chinese and Portuguese, was born in Honolulu. He spent his childhood in his grandmother’s home, eating Hawaiian food and speaking a broken English called pidgin.

His days were filled with diving, spear fishing in the ocean and playing on the beach.

When Isaacs was 7, his family moved to Virginia Beach, a city dominated by a military base. Isaacs’ friends had lived in places such as Italy, Japan and Italy, and he didn’t feel singular in his diverse background. Although he didn’t feel particularly worldly, he nevertheless felt somewhat out of place in Virginia. The kids in his neighborhood had lighter skin than his family in Hawaii, and no one spoke pidgin English.

College is another step away from his culture, Isaacs says. "Because I’m not around my father as much, I don’t assert my Hawaiian identity as much." Here, he hasn’t found a place he really fits in, and when he returns to Hawaii, it is hard to feel he still belongs there, either. "You’re just stuck in limbo," Isaacs says. "You have to be kind of like a cultural chameleon in a sense." Isaacs says he adapts his identity to those around him, and it is easy for him to blend in because he looks white.

For some biracial students, however, being a chameleon is hard. "The problem that they face saying, ‘I am biracial,’ is other people saying, ‘No, you’ve got to choose,’" says Angela Neal-Barnett, associate professor and research psychologist. "With biracial adolescents, you get two things happening: They choose to identify with one race or they choose to develop a biracial identity."

For more than five years, Neal-Barnett has been studying the phenomenon of "white acting" in minority adolescents. Through her research, she has talked with biracial youth, most of whom are primarily black and white.

"One’s skin color can run the gamut, and one’s hair color and texture can run the gamut. You have students who look white, but their racial identity is black or biracial," she says. In fact, the biracial adolescents Neal-Barnett has spoken with almost always choose to identify as black or biracial. Very few identify as white.

Growing up, a black identity was more familiar to James McBride, author of The Color of Water: A Black Man’s Tribute to His White Mother, a memoir recounting his Brooklyn childhood with his black father and white Jewish mother. "It’s always been easy for me to stay on the black side of the world," he says. But race was only one factor — other elements, such as socioeconomic status, played a part. "I’ve always identified more with working-class people, white and black," he says. As
a youth, he admired those making livings as plumbers, gas station attendants and Wal-Mart employees. "These are the heroes in my world," McBride says.

For that reason upon others, McBride now chooses to speak at universities, including Kent State, because he feels a connection with the students — students who know what it is like to have a job, McBride says. "I enjoy trying to at least help people put some things in perspective. This is the place where your early opinions are subject to change."

McBride himself learned something about pride from his professor Wendell Logan, a black jazz composer, while studying at Oberlin College in the '70s. At that time, the music conservatory did not view jazz highly, and Logan was treated very poorly, McBride says. But it was Logan's response to the mistreatment that inspired McBride. "He would never let anybody know that it was bothering him," McBride says. "His students saw that, white and black. The dignity that he possessed was a lesson."

But the lessons don't end in college, and neither does the formation of one's cultural identity. "I don't think it's something you work out in college," McBride says. "I think it's something you explore in college — the joy is in the journey."

In most cases, the search for belonging that biracial and multiracial students experience is not negative but is a healthy part of the developmental process, Neal-Barnett says. "There is this belief that is still prevalent that biracial adolescents are confused and don't know who they are. That is not true."

For Nikki Frye, sophomore interior design major, part of celebrating her cultural identity is being knowledgeable and proud of where she comes from. Frye is half Japanese and half white. Her mother is from Okinawa, Japan. Frye's middle name, Chiharu, means "beautiful springtime."

"You're just stuck in limbo. You have to be kind of like a cultural chameleon in a sense."
Seeing her parents standing side by side shows the melding of Frye’s two cultures. Her mother is a traditional Japanese woman, and her father is an “ideal all-American,” with red hair, blue eyes and freckles, she says.

Embracing both her father’s and her mother’s heritages means acknowledging both. She plans to have an elaborate Japanese wedding, complete with handmade kimonos. “I want to have both because I already have my American wedding all planned out,” she says, smiling.

She has lit incense during Buddhist prayers to her ancestors while in Japan and has found her father’s family name at Ellis Island. But when she fills out forms, she always checks the Asian box.

“I’m very proud of my Asian side,” Frye says. “I’m proud I have that culture in me. It’s different from the usual American background.” She plans to continue learning about her heritage and will soon return to Japan to absorb more of that part of her.

Like Frye, Nadal plans to continue learning about her different cultures during and after college. Both women will take classes in their native languages and cultures, helping deepen the depth of their identities. “I’m still working on it,” Nadal says. “Growing up, I learned more about the African-American side and the Native side. I didn’t really get to experience the Puerto Rican culture.”

Nadal decided to continue learning about her Hispanic culture by choosing Latin American studies as her major and by becoming the treasurer of the Spanish and Latino Student Association. “I want to learn more about my peoples,” she says happily. In SALSA, she helped prepare for Hispanic Awareness Week at Kent State by inviting speakers and visiting dance troupes. “I would love to bring open-mindedness to this campus,” Nadal says.

Frye knows what it is like to desire more understanding from her peers. She has dealt with ignorance about her Japanese culture, usually in the form of rude questions.
"You choose for yourself a racial identity that's you, which means an identity that's comfortable for you."

"(Japanese) have beds, and they don't always sleep on the floor," she says. And only parts of Tokyo are a hub for extreme fashion. Most Japanese are modest in their dress.

"I went to see Pearl Harbor, and I almost walked out of the theater," she says. Vicious comments about the Japanese spewed from the mouths of audience members. "It makes me mad when people are ignorant about it."

Isaacs echoes Frye's experience. He recalls being asked whether he wears grass skirts and lives in a straw hut in Hawaii.

Multiculturalism can thrive most easily when all are educated about other cultures in addition to their own. Ultimately, each person will identify with the culture or cultures he or she feels most at home with, Neal-Barnett says. "You choose for yourself a racial identity that's you, which means an identity that's comfortable for you."

Ten-year-old Kaishawn Kent lives with a white family, but her cultural experience is biracial. Her mother, Terri, is deliberately raising her with both white and black culture. "We took our whole family to a black Baptist church," says Terri Kent, associate professor of theater at Kent State. Her family also celebrates Martin Luther King Jr. Day in Cleveland. "Not just Kaishawn, our whole family."

Kaishawn says students in her fifth-grade class ask a lot of questions about her family. "Like, 'Who is your real mom?' or, 'Why are your mom and dad white?'" Kaishawn says. "I just say it's because I was adopted and because they're my mom and dad."

It can be intimidating to be a white parent of a black child. Terri often defends her ability to be a good mother for Kaishawn. She has faced hostility from strangers who do not agree with her decision to raise a black child. But she makes conscious efforts not to raise Kaishawn entirely in a white culture. The Kent family eats collard greens at dinner, among other foods, and celebrates both Kwanzaa and Christmas.

Part of celebrating more than one culture is to not stop with one's own. The Kents celebrate Hanukkah, too, after Terri's son, Samuel, came home from kindergarten, disappointed his family wasn't Jewish after learning about Hanukkah.

The Hawaiian-born Isaacs thinks many students don't think about multiculturalism because they are satisfied just thinking of themselves as Americans. Being American is great, he says, but it shouldn't be the only identity students explore. "I think a lot of kids here really have no clue what their cultural identity is about," Isaacs says. "They don't seem to want to strive for information about their heritage. You should always try to find out what your background is and where you came from. Don't just settle for 'I'm here right now' — every family has its own story."

Liz Smith, assistant professor of history, says a growing number of Americans identify themselves as biracial or multiracial, and the 2000 U.S. Census reflects this. It was the first time respondents were allowed to mark more than one race.

About 6.8 million people, or 2.4 percent of the U.S. population, reported being more than one race, according to the 2000 Census. It is notable that the census asks respondents not if they are more than one race, but if they identify as more than one.

"There is a problem with using terms like 'race' because there are no real differences between races," Smith says. "The idea that race is somehow something that you are is a socially constructed idea. There is no one category of 'white' or 'black' or 'mixed.'"

Steve Michael, vice provost of diversity, says Kent State is focusing on diversity education in hopes that learning about other cultures and people will teach students more about themselves. "That diversity is the strength of that family, not the weakness of that family," Michael says. "How do we integrate a human family that's unfortunately too fragmented on too many superficial levels?"

The future of multiculturalism in America is uncertain, but its success likely relies on American youth becoming excited about diversity — that racial and cultural differences don't have to divide people. Those differences make them stronger.

Kaishawn says she never wished her family looked like her. "I never really wished that they were black," she says. "There were a lot of people they could have adopted, but they picked me."

Jessica Rothschuh is a senior magazine journalism major. This is her third time writing for The Burr.
Germ-conscious students strive to stay sanitized

Story by Steve Schirra
Photo illustration by Lauren Sabol

“There aren’t many fanny-transferred germs.”

A microscopic matter

DIMANAJJARTHINKSIFEVER YONE lived like she does, the world would be cleaner. When the junior international relations and broadcast journalism major uses a public restroom, she goes on a germ defensive.

“Before I wash my hands, I pull down on the paper towels so I don’t have to touch the handle,” she says. “I wash my hands several times because the soap in the bathroom is generic. Then I hit the handicap button so I don’t have to touch the door.”

Najjar is not alone.

Students adjusting to a college atmosphere often find themselves worried about the increased number of germs associated with thousands of people living in the same small environment. This can cause students to have some unusual bathroom habits.

But not everyone is as germ-conscious as Najjar. Although most students practice basic hygiene, such as hand washing, they do not understand students who go above and beyond the basics to avoid germs.

Najjar recalls one time her paper towel maneuver backfired. “I pulled down a paper towel and went to wash my hands, and the girl next to me thought I pulled it down for her and took the towel. I was thinking, ‘Is she serious?'”

The girl thanked Najjar for her kind gesture.

Najjar also is worried about contamination on toilet seats and tries to use toilet paper to block potential germs and viruses. “If it’s a restroom that looks like it gets cleaned often, I’ll use maybe seven sheets on the seat,” she says. “And if it’s dirty? Probably 11 to 17.”

But Charles Gerba, a microbiologist at the University of Arizona who has made a career out of tracking the spread of germs, says the risk from public toilet seats is microscopic.

“Seventeen sheets of toilet paper is probably overkill, particularly on a toilet seat,” he says, noting that 48 percent of women either wipe off or cover the seat in restrooms. “I would be more worried about slipping off.”

Gerba’s research shows that the toilet seat is the least contaminated site in bathrooms, with the most contaminated area being the sink drain. The areas that breed the most bacteria are typically moist, which is why toilet seats are at the bottom of the list. “There aren’t many fanny-transferred germs,” he adds.

The most important thing for germ-conscious students to do is wash their hands regularly, especially after using the bathroom or preparing food, Gerba says. Alcohol-based antibacterial gels, such as Purell, have been found to reduce illness by 30 percent to 50 percent and are easy for college students to carry in a book bag if they’re really worried about getting sick.

But a recent study by the Food and Drug Administration showed households using antibacterial soaps had no significant reduction in infections than households using regular soap and water. “The industry failed with antibacterial to show it was effective,” Gerba says. “It wasn’t shown to be better.” Antibacterial gels are still effective, though, Gerba says, especially when paired with hand washing.

When living in close quarters, such as dorms, it’s a good idea for students to clean common areas and work surfaces as often as possible.

The notorious Norovirus, or “stomach flu,” is known to cause projectile vomiting and diarrhea and spreads quickly through tight quarters, including residence halls.

Sophomore fashion merchandising major Kelli Ciola says she thinks she’s healthy, but she doesn’t find herself consciously thinking about germs all the time. “They’re not something you can see,” she says. “You’re so distracted by your everyday life that you don’t worry about it.”

Gerba says he thinks people will start to become more conscious of contaminates and their personal hygiene with the scare of the Avian Flu. “People should be (aware of contaminates) based on findings,” he says.

He adds that a daily cleaning of high-traffic areas is a good way to diminish the spread of germs. Some of the most contaminated areas in Gerba’s research have been telephone receivers, computer mice, desktops and arm rests, but he has found one place that is a germ-breeding heaven: kitchen dishcloths.

“If I died and came back as a germ,” he says, “I would want to come back in a dishcloth.”

Steve Schirra is a junior English major. This is his first time writing for The Burr.
Congratulations Burr and CyBurr staffs

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• Finalist, Molly Corfman, Photo-illustration, "Leaving Scars," The Burr, spring 2004

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• Best Student Magazine: General Excellence, The Burr, Jaclyn Youhana, editor.

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