THE ROAMING 20s How Millennials are reshaping young adulthood

WHAT HAPPENED TO MALIKA WILLOUGHBY?
A STAGE-THREE LOVE STORY
The School of Journalism and Mass Communication

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ASHLEY’S PICK
It measures your body movements to determine what phase of REM sleep you’re in. The alarm clock then wakes you at the lightest phase of your REM cycle. Your day is officially programmed for success.

2. PERFECTLY PROTEIN VANILLA CHAI TEA
JEN’S PICK
I don’t pretend to know about soy protein or vitamin intake; I just drink up because it’s delicious.

3. AVON CARE DEEPLY ALOE LIP BALM
KELLEY’S PICK
I love this stuff. My mom started buying these for me and since then my usual chapped and cracked lips are a thing of the past.
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HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT
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PASS THE HORE-DOO-VRES
Become a citizen of the world with these helpful tips.

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"CONGRATULATIONS to all students involved in producing print and electronic media. Your CREATIVITY, INTEGRITY & INCLUSIVENESS make us proud."

Kent State Student Media=Excellence in Action
Our generation has a bit of an identity crisis. Ask someone what defines the Millennials and people just stand there, unsure of what to say. The '60s and '70s (the Baby Boomers) had hippies, freedom and LSD, the '80s were shaped by the Cold War and ever-imaginative pursuits of fun (like the Rubik's Cube and the original Tron), even the '90s are associated with black eyeliner, Nirvana and the grunge-loving scene. But what about us? We're Generation Y — the 20-somethings — but what does that say about who we are?

This issue of The Burr takes a look at all us 20-somethings and who we are individually as well as a generation. Like our cover story on page 41, which examines the expectations placed on budding 20-year-olds. Some psychologists think we're not growing up fast enough, others think we're just taking our time. Whatever adulthood means to you, there's not one set path to grown-up-dom anymore. And while we were pondering what it really means to be an adult, we snagged a few Kent State alumni and asked them about their fondest (and craziest) college memories (pg. 18). They told us about their ambitions in their 20s and where they really ended up.

We also made sure to take a look at our generation's obsession with technology. We checked everything from the history of the World of Warcraft (pg. 58) to the use of text speak (i.e. lol, omg, =P, wtf). Although some might argue it's destroying the English language, one Kent State professor thinks we're onto something good (pg. 16).

So whatever being a 20-something, an adult-to-be or a Millennial means to you, you're sure to find something to enjoy in this issue. We packed in fun recipes, must-have items to get you through a stressful week and some great in-depth pieces to surprise and inspire.

The Millennials may not have a defining look or theme, but maybe there's something special in being indefinable. We hope this issue touches something that defines you.

Ashley Sepanski
Editor
Week after week we watch our favorite TV shows and admire the styles of various characters. We feel like we have a connection with them, almost as if they’re some of our best friends. And who doesn’t like sharing clothes with their friends? The Burr does a style break down of a few of our favorite characters.

**Vanessa Abrams**

*“Gossip Girl”*

Vanessa is a hip Lower East Sider. She loves her loose flowing tops, chunky jewelry and anything vintage she can get her hands on. To dress like Vanessa, wear lots of colors at once and mix your prints. She wears very skinny jeans and at times she wears just blousy shirts cinched with a belt and tights instead of jeans. When it comes to shoes, she loves bright colored sneakers and black leather ankle boots. Vanessa’s style is very experimental and fun so be sure to match every outfit with confidence!

**Rachel Berry**

*“Glee”*

It's been said that Rachel is the only person who dresses like a toddler and a grandmother at the same time, yet she somehow pulls it off. Rachel’s style is very Catholic school. She usually wears plaid, pleated skirts, but they’re shorter than what any nun would allow. Her dresses are usually jumpers with puff-sleeved oxford shirts underneath. Rachel loves to wear bright colors and patterns. She is often seen in cable knit sweaters or sweaters with animals on them. And of course, no Rachel Berry outfit is complete without a pair of knee socks.

**Nate Archibald**

*“Gossip Girl”*

Blair wanted him. Serena wanted him. Jenny wanted him. Vanessa wanted him. Juliette wanted him. Guys want to be swooned over the way Nate is. One easy way for guys to be like him is to dress like him. Here is a quick and easy breakdown of his style: While his look is preppy it is also disheveled, which is what drives all the girls crazy. He is often seen wearing cable-knit sweaters and dress shirts. To keep from looking too stuffy, try unbuttoning the collar, rolling up the sleeves and leaving the dress shirt untucked. Add a little bit of gel to your hair and mess it up a bit and you’re on your way to being Nate Archibald.
QUINN FABRAY
"Glee"
When Quinn isn’t in her Cheerios uniform, her style is very girly and sweet. She usually wears pastel colors and soft, floral prints. Quinn rarely wears pants, but when she does she usually pairs them with flirty, flowy tops. She loves simple sundresses and plain cardigans. Other than her Cheerios uniform, Quinn strays away from tight-fitting and short clothes. As for shoes, she often wears ballet flats.

JENNY HUMPHREY
“Gossip Girl”
Little J has turned into quite the rebel, which is reflected in her clothing. Jenny is very edgy and not afraid to stand out. Lately, she has gotten into blacks and grays which can be mixed with almost anything to look New York City chic. Jenny loves to wear lace tights with short skirts and shorts. She is often seen wearing long coats and favors pea coats and leather jackets. Like the other girls, Jenny isn’t afraid to wear and mix bold prints. She is also one of the only girls on the show who wears hats. So to top off your Jenny look, grab a fedora!

SERENA VAN DER WOODSEN
“Gossip Girl”
Serena is very bold and fashion-forward. She’s not afraid to mix designer and vintage. Even though something may look crazy on a hanger, Serena can make it look effortlessly chic. Serena loves to wear all kinds of jackets. To mimic this, it’s all about the cut and the tailoring. She also wears a lot of skinny jeans. While not everyone can afford Seven for All Mankind like she does, Levi’s have a similar fit. To go with her jeans, Serena often wears slouchy button-down shirts with a jacket or vest. When it comes to accessories, layer necklaces and put on a pair of boots.

ARTIE ABRAMS
"Glee"
Artie always finds a way to rock the nerd look. He is almost always in sweater vests, his favorites being argyle and plaid printed. Under his sweater vests, he normally wears button-downs paired with either a regular necktie or a bowtie. He usually coordinates the color of his button-down to go along with his sweater vest. Artie often switches it up between wearing jeans and light-colored pleated dress pants. When it comes to shoes, he usually wears converse.

BLAIR WALDORF
“Gossip Girl”
This “queen bee” has the ultimate fashion sense. Blair’s style is very preppy and put together. She epitomizes the Upper East Side stereotype and is proud of it. The first, and possibly most important, way to mimic Blair’s style is with skirts. She is never seen in pants, even in winter she pairs skirts with tights. When she’s not wearing a skirt, Blair loves dresses. For shirts, Blair often wears tailored and collared shirts. She always finds a way to add a pop of color to whatever she’s wearing. To finish off Blair’s girly look, be sure to add her favorite accessory: a headband!

WOMEN IN “Mad Men”
This ’60s style has taken the nation by storm and many women are trying to mimic the look. To dress like the women from “Mad Men,” it’s best to go for a full skirt with a petticoat along with matching pumps and a purse. And at the complete opposite end of the spectrum, the women are also seen wearing tight dresses in jewel tones. Pleats are very popular in their skirts along with blouses with bows. Adding on a swipe of red lipstick will complete any “Mad Men” look.
You don’t need a passport to get a taste of something different. You don’t even need a restaurant. The next time you’re planning a meal, put aside the Easy Mac and hot dogs and experience a little piece of the world outside of Kent, Ohio. A quick google search will yield you many simple international dishes to add a little zest to your diet and expand your cultural horizons. Trust us, your taste buds will thank you.

**ITALY**

**Tomato Bruschetta**

**Ingredients:**
- 8 ripe Roma tomatoes, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 5 leaves fresh basil, chopped
- 1 pinch dried oregano
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 pinch pepper
- 1 pinch crushed red pepper
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 loaf of Italian bread
- Mozzarella cheese (optional)

**Directions:**
1. In a large bowl, combine the tomatoes, basil, oregano, olive oil and garlic. Mix thoroughly and add the salt and pepper.
2. Refrigerate the mixture for about 15 minutes.
3. Slice the Italian bread on an angle in thin pieces.
4. Preheat your oven to 450 degrees. On a baking sheet, lay down the bread and spread the mixture on top.
5. Cook for 5-6 minutes or until bread is slightly brown. Top with mozzarella cheese, if desired.

**JAPAN**

**Miso Soup**

**Ingredients:**
- 3 cups dashi soup stock (found in most supermarkets)
- 1 block tofu
- 4 Tablespoons miso paste
- 1/4 cup chopped green onion
- 1/4 cup chopped red pepper

**Directions:**
1. Put dashi soup stock in a pan and bring to a boil.
2. Cut tofu into small cubes and add them to the soup.
3. Simmer the tofu for a few minutes on low heat.
4. Take some of the soup stock from the pan and pour it into a bowl of miso. Gradually continue adding the soup stock to the miso and stir.
5. Turn off the heat and add chopped green onion.
CHINA

**Egg Rolls**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 2 cups of savoy cabbage, chopped
- 2 cups of shredded carrots
- 1 can of water chestnuts, chopped
- 2 tablespoons green onions, sliced
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/4 cup water
- 14 egg roll wraps
- Sweet chili dipping sauce or sweet and sour sauce (for dipping)

**Directions:**
1. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Once hot, add the cabbage, sprouts, carrots, chestnuts and ginger to the pan and cook, stirring frequently for 4-5 minutes.
2. Mix the cornstarch with water and mix thoroughly. Add the cornstarch mixture and soy sauce to the pan along with the green onions. Cook for an additional 1-2 minutes or until the sauce thickens. Remove from heat and let cool.
3. Place two Tablespoons of the cooled mixture on the center of the egg roll wrap. Fold the bottom up over the filling, fold the two sides over, and then roll it up like a burrito.
4. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray. Place the rolled-up egg rolls on a baking sheet. Once you have rolled them all, spray the top of each egg roll with cooking spray.
5. Place in the oven and bake for 8-10 minutes, then turn them over. Bake for an additional 5-7 minutes or until crispy and golden brown. Serve with sweet chili sauce or sweet and sour sauce.

GERMANY

**Potato Salad**

**Ingredients:**
- 4 cups sliced cooked potatoes
- 6 slices bacon
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 cup vinegar
- 1 teaspoon celery seed

**Directions:**
1. Bake potatoes in the microwave. Cool slightly, peel and slice.
2. Cut bacon in small pieces and cook in glass dish for 5 minutes on high.
5. Cook in microwave for 3 minutes, stirring every minute. Blend in potatoes and celery seed.

FRANCE

**Strawberry Cream Crepes**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- Strawberries, sliced
- Whipped cream

**Directions:**
1. Combine flour, sugar and salt in a bowl.
2. Add flour mixture, milk and egg, and beat well to combine.
3. Heat a lightly oiled griddle or frying pan over medium-high heat. Pour the batter onto the griddle, using approximately 1/4 cup for each crepe. Tilt the pan with a circular motion so that the batter coats the surface evenly.
4. Cook the crepe for about 2 minutes, until the bottom is light brown. Loosen with a spatula, turn and cook the other side.
5. Fill crepes with desired filling (in this case, strawberries and whipped cream) and fold in half twice to create a triangle shape or roll up like a burrito.
CALL IT FICTION

Started Up:
October 2010

Name origin:
"I was listening to a Jason Mraz song (Beautiful Mess), and he says ‘call it fiction’ in there," Blair says. "The meaning of it was not that lyric, but how it represents you want to tell a story that sounds like it could be made up or surreal. That’s what we’re all about. We want to be able to have those stories when we have kids or whatever to be like, ‘Hey, I tried this.’ Even if we don’t get signed.”

Sounds Like:
"If Fall Out Boy had sex with Vonder Years, we’d be that baby," Rinaldo says. "We’re this weird gray area that’s going on in pop/punk right now," Tucker says. "There’s really poppy pop/punk bands and super fast-paced hardcore pop/punk. We’re right in the middle."

What makes them different:
Tucker is a big concert promoter in the area. His expertise has helped Call it Fiction snag several bookings.

Latest work:
EP called “Something I’ve Never Felt” that was released in March and is available on iTunes.

Song to listen to:
“An American Werewolf in Cleveland”

How they’re going to make it big:
“We’re looking for bigger bands who are touring and need the local support to open,” Tucker says.

Sometimes, we’ll go to sold-out shows we’re not playing in to pass out CDs or make connections,” Blair says.

Biggest goal:
“Our ultimate goal is to get signed,” Blair says. “We’re just taking baby steps. We always have room to improve. I’m never satisfied with the music we have. But I think we’re just going to get better and better.”
EXIT CLEVELAND

Started Up:
Six years ago, but not much happened the first three years.

Name origin:
“We picked it out of a hat a long time ago,” Peter says. “Me and Joey were sitting in the garage with our sisters, and we wanted to make a band. We put like 100 words in a hat and picked two or three and went with the best name.”
( Editor’s note: This “band” was just the Ianni siblings drumming on boxes and trying to copy their idols: Hanson.)
“Still, when we made our real band we ran with it,” Peter explains. “Sometimes we hate it, sometimes we love it. We’re too ‘established’ to change it. We’re Exit Cleveland.”
“Just like LeBron,” Davidson adds.

What makes them different:
They are all somehow related: Joey and Peter are twins. Pugel is the twins’ cousin. Pugel and Davidson’s grandmothers are cousins.

Latest work:
Finishing up a new CD with a single already on iTunes.

Song to listen to:
“Starting Rumors”

How they’re going to make it big:
“We were in contact with Forever the Sickest Kids for a while,” Joey says. “Their singer has or had a clothing company, and we were endorsed by them. They gave us a lot of pointers.”
“We’ve played with Bowling for Soup and Red Jumpsuit Apparatus, too,” Pugel says.

Biggest goal:
“At first it was fun and whatever happens, happens,” Peter says. “Now that we’re getting more recognition, we can actually get somewhere. It’s still fun, but we want to get somewhere for doing it.”
“Right now, we just want to finish our CD, keep writing and keep promoting,” Joey says.

Mark Davidson (bass)
junior computer science
major at Kent State

Joey Ianni (guitar, vocals)
junior visual communication
design major at Kent State

Peter Ianni (drums)
junior exploratory
major at Kent State

Justin Pugel (guitar)
freshman exploratory
major at Kent State

LIGHT YEARS

Started up:
Summer 2009

Name origin:
“It really means nothing,” Kennedy says. “It just came to me. People are always like, ‘Is it like Buzz Lightyear?’ Shut up.”

Sounds like:
90s pop/punk

What makes them different:
“Every night on tour before we go to bed, we set aside an hour for giggling,” Graves says.

“We have a tour morale, and we have to keep it high,” English explains. “It gets like a rollercoaster sometimes: really high or really low. We keep it high with giggle hour.”

Latest work:
8-track EP, with songs available as free downloads on their Facebook page.

Song to listen to:
“World Burns Out”

How they’re going to make it big:
“This makes me sound like a dad, but you can do anything with the Internet,” Kennedy says. “We try to help people get shows so they’ll help us get shows. It’s all about networking.”
“It’s like an underground railroad,” English says.

Biggest goal:
“Hopefully we don’t turn into that band where they’re like, ‘Stop! You’re 39 and you still play at the Rathskeller,’” Kennedy says. “We just want to keep it fresh,” Graves says. “We just want to keep touring as much as we can,” English says, “and have all of the things that we write be better than before.”
“And tour Europe,” Englert adds.
It was Sept. 11, 2010, a day already cursed with a negative connotation. The day that represents a national catastrophe now stands for when the past three years, three months, eight days and the rest of my life changed forever.

Sitting on my bed feeling defeated, I held my cell phone in my hand. Failure and helplessness coursed through my veins because even though I was ready to part ways with someone I once adored, I was struggling to come to terms with the fact I couldn't fix not loving someone anymore. Not even someone you've engaged to.

The decision to break up wasn't one I came to lightly. The idea was toiling in my head for eight months, but I tried to reason with myself I thought I was going through just another rough patch in a long-term relationship.

I failed to comprehend, though, that a rough patch didn't constitute avoiding going home because I didn't want to burrow out a place to sit on a floor full of clothes to be with my fiancé. The real problem wasn't the clothes. It was that in three years, there was still no conversation that wouldn't be confronted with hostility, and fault was always a one-way street.

I sat on the bed thinking about how I couldn't be in that relationship anymore. I sent the text that would change the rest of my life.

"We need to talk when you get back."

It was a Saturday in July 2009, and I stood in her driveway. The sun crept dimly through the tree branches, creating romantic lighting. That morning I nervously dressed-I threw on a pair of khakis with a yellow golf shirt that awkwardly fit me. I paid no attention to what I was wearing, though, because I had a firm grip on my phone with my left hand as I loosely twiddled a red, velvet ring box in my right.

Clue after clue, she ventured to the next place and waited for instructions via text on how to find the next location. At first she was confused and frustrated, which is understandable because I sent her halfway around Marion County, but eventually she started to catch on.

It had been two years, but I knew I was ready— we were ready—for her to read the final clue and return to her driveway. It was where I first asked her to be my girlfriend, we shared our first kiss, I first told her I loved her and now where I would ask her to be my wife.

That day in the driveway, she asked me if I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her. I did.

POP GOES THE QUESTION

After the break up, I felt a mixture of relief and anxiety. I wondered how my life would change. With her, my future was planned out, and now I had no idea what might happen. Throughout the first day, I fast-forwarded through my life, thinking of all the people I could meet, all the late nights at work I could have guilt-free and knowing if I didn't shave for a few days, well, there wouldn't be a fiancé to disapprove.

The flash of new independence was like having my first beer: exciting for the first few sips, but then the excitement sort of disappeared when I realized I paid someone for a drink that actually tastes horrible.

DIFFICULT FIRST STEP

After the break up, I felt a mixture of relief and anxiety. I wondered how my life would change. With her, my future was planned out, and now I had no idea what might happen. Throughout the first day, I fast-forwarded through my life, thinking of all the people I could meet, all the late nights at work I could have guilt-free and knowing if I didn't shave for a few days, well, there wouldn't be a fiancé to disapprove.

I had similar anxious butterflies when I
approached my ex-fiancé's dad to ask him for his daughter's hand in marriage just a couple months before proposing to her, or when I drove all the way to West Virginia in July 2010 to look at the ring I thought was perfect.

Comfort with everyday activities also changed and the dependence I developed on having someone else affected things as simple as falling asleep.

To say I hadn't fallen asleep alone in those three years wouldn't be truthful, but it always felt like something was missing on those nights alone. At first the void was filled with shuffling the same 20 songs on my iPod each night. As a kid, falling asleep required watching the Weather Channel or listening to the Lion King soundtrack on cassette.

Ten years later, it was no longer the dull murmur of the weatherman in the background or the soothing roar of a young Simba that lulled me asleep. It was the pre-sleeping ritual of fighting over which side of the bed I had or finally settling down, recognizing the fragrance of her hair or just the familiarity of nesting in for the night.

Beyond sleep, everyday habits were among the many aspects of life affected by the break up. I no longer tripped over flat iron cords, dealt with the piles of both washed and unwashed clothes on the bedroom floor or fumbled in the shower with the multiple bottles of green apple, cocoa butter or butter crème shampoo while I searched for the one labeled "men's."

Whether I enjoyed the experiences or not, those moments were the crayons that gave my day color.

I realized after a couple of failed attempts to go on dates that I wouldn't be good for anyone if I couldn't stand to be by myself. So I kept the first couple of months after the relationship pretty dormant. It pulled against everything I felt because I didn't want to be alone. I was still in relationship mode, and I yearned for something that could be achieved only after dating someone for a while: companionship.

Just as a kid has to learn to entertain himself, I needed to relearn how to be by myself. When I was in high school I had no trouble being alone. Even when friends were busy a movie and dinner by myself wasn't a big deal.

In the beginning weeks of the break up, I clutched onto my phone hoping I would have a text from a friend who wanted to hang out or just someone who wanted to talk.

In the past couple of months I have gotten to know myself again. I compromised on my likes and dislikes over the past three years, so I had to rediscover myself. Going grocery shopping reopened my eyes to all the foods I once liked but never really ate because someone else didn't like them.

Superman's weakness was kryptonite, but mine would be a can of black olives. I remembered the joys of sitting down to relax with black olives and watching TV. All the black olive haters can say what they will, but hey — that's me.

A few months ago, I also wouldn't have dared to wear my Captain Kirk yellow Star-Fleet issued uniform shirt because I probably would have embarrassed someone, but I wear it proudly now knowing I'm being true to myself.

It is safe to say, though, each day has gotten easier and more natural to be alone. Returning to my apartment after work, there is something strangely comforting about walking into the dark living room, switching on a light, announcing my presence and having no one respond.

For some, silence is like walking on pins and needles, but for me — right now — it's OK.

**EXPLORING THE NEW WORLD**

The most exciting part about starting fresh was also the most terrifying: meeting new women. As someone who wants to be a journalist, I can say I have broken down the barrier of being nervous when I approach strangers. I have even become immune to the idea of rejection when they don't want to talk to me.

Still, after being out of the game so long, I can remember going out with some friends after the break up to a local bar and seeing an attractive girl and thinking, "What do I do? Do I go up and ask her name? Do I compliment her and see if that leads somewhere?"

I have come to realize meeting new women is sort of like hunting because you find someone you would like to talk to, and you spend the rest of the evening waiting for the right moment to pounce.

I also learned early on that it is best if both the hunter and the hunted are sober when they meet. She might appear to be a very interesting, funny person in that state, but when I see her soberly I realize the only thing funny about her jokes is that they don't make sense.

Hunting while not sober also has the possibility to making one look like a fool. What I thought would come out smoothly like I was Rico Suave, actually came out as, "Wolpsdj ylfjksk djkd sjkjd s free beer?"

Luckily for me, it was the end of the night, and the $2 I didn't spend on her beer went toward much-needed Taco Bell.

As satisfying as the taco was, I knew it couldn't replace the fact that I had gone from knowing everything about someone to knowing absolutely nothing about anyone I was pursuing.

Even though I am starting from scratch, I have a better sense now of what I want someday. I want at least two kids, to live in the suburbs of a big city, have a dog and to start fun traditions with my family like Sunday dinners.

I still want those things, and as I explore the new world, "where no man has gone before," I will just have to find someone who is looking for the same thing. I guess, until then, Trekkie Tuesdays will do.
Fear controlled her life. She subjected herself to his daily abuse in the form of hair pulling, pushing, slapping and finger crushing, which left no physical evidence. One evening, he helped her bathe, dress in her pajamas and crawl into bed. She asked for a snack, and hours later he brought it, riddled with anger because she shuffled her position while sleeping. He threw the banana at her, hitting her nose. He dragged her to the bed’s edge by the ankles and threw himself on top of her. He harshly wrote letters on her cheek with his finger. “I put you where I wanted you.” He degraded her into feeling like an animal by repeatedly demanding her to stay. She cried herself to sleep. She endured years of pain until Joseph, her 5-year-old son, said, “Daddy is bad because he hurts you.”

Her son’s simple, honest statement brought Angie Orlando to a life-altering decision. But she feared a judge would never reward custody of a child to a deaf-blind mother.
More than four years have passed since Angie sought freedom from domestic violence. Despite her disabilities, after years of legal battle, she won custody of her son, which she claims to be the most thrilling moment of her life. Angie and Joseph currently live in Kent with Angie’s parents in the home where she spent her childhood. Her parents give ease to the whirlwind of being a single mother; Angie still faces numerous obstacles.

When Angie was 13, she started to lose her hearing. When she was 16, she started to lose her peripheral vision and had night blindness. About nine years ago, while still married, she suffered “the illness,” as she calls it. “What we think is that my body was too stressed with something and my cells started stealing energy from nerves and muscles,” Angie says. Within about two weeks of first becoming ill, she lost all feeling in her hands, and she couldn’t walk. She also lost what little hearing and remaining vision she had.

“The last thing I saw was my son – his face was about seven months old, and he was creeping around, crying out, worming his way around the living room wearing a red sweatshirt. He looked up at me and smiled. The image was really fuzzy, but I could see his blue eyes and his mouth and the red shirt. That’s the last thing I ever saw. The next day I woke up, and I couldn’t see anything,” Angie says, signing along to her own words. “Josef says it’s weird that his mother doesn’t even know what he looks like.”

Like most mothers, her main concern is for the well being of her son, but in this case, the concern is brought to the forefront because doctors can’t actually figure out the definite cause of Angie’s problems. The doctors think it may be the genetic disorder mitochondrial myopathy. One of her symptoms is polyneuropathy – a condition that causes nerve damage in multiple body parts.

“I’d like to move on with my life, but the medical stuff keeps dragging me back and slowing me down,” Angie says. “I just have to wait.”

The mother passes down Mitochondrial disorders, and her biggest fear in life is Joseph inheriting her disability, but he isn’t showing any traces or signs. But he can sign. He communicates to Angie by signing directly into her hands. Angie’s mother, Lois, only knows a few words in sign, but she can spell out letters with her fingers to talk to her daughter. Angie’s father communicates by sending text messages to her Braille reader, which is Bluetooth capable, so she can also email, read and surf the Web.

Angie recently took advantage of another technology: a new cochlear implant. With 25 years difference between it and the first one she had placed, the results are evident. In her blog, Angie writes about her struggles, encounters and experiences as a deaf and blind single mother. The new implant opened her ears to a new level of sound.

“More noise is turning to identifiable sound. I love just sitting and listening… trying to pick up something new. I always feel so rewarded when I do,” Angie writes. With the old implant, she could only hear environmental sounds. Now she can hear minor dialogue, but it’s difficult to comprehend it. Because she’s showing improvement, she wants Josef and her parents to verbally speak to her, as opposed to signing.

Angie blogged about practicing with her mother. “I asked my mother to name fruits that she likes to eat. I almost got them all. I distinctly heard her say strawberry, apple, grapes and cantaloupe. Then she decided to be cute. She said ‘strawzberry’. I picked up on the ‘S’ sound but couldn’t figure out the rest.”

Although Angie likes the advantages of technology, especially when communicating with her Braille reader, she said it’s always nice to rely on sign language as a backup. Last semester, her Introduction to Creative Writing class allowed her to practice her signing. An interpreter narrated the class lesson and dialogue into Angie’s palms. It is somewhat difficult for her to keep up because the class moves quickly; it is also physically straining.

Her elbows are exhausted from overuse. Pain radiates through her arm every time she feels her conversations, reads Braille or moves them.

“You never really think of how much work an elbow does until it begins to hurt. Every movement of the fingers, hands and wrists go back to the elbow,” Angie blogs. “There’s no way around an angry elbow. You just have to deal with it.”

It seems as though Angie deals with everything in stride – because she does. Even simple frustrations don’t faze her. One day last October, her computer wasn’t communicating with her cell phone properly, which cut off communication. It wouldn’t be out of the ordinary for someone in today’s world to lash out against technology, seethe with frustration and curse, but Angie is extraordinary. Instead of throwing her hands up in irritation or cursing out all computers, she simply says, “I don’t understand it. I charged it last night.” And took steps toward solving the problem. Patience is vital in Angie’s life, especially when trying to cope with pain — whether it is physical or emotional. She writes: “Patience. I will get over all of this soon enough. I just try to concentrate on how great it will be to have a healthy and pain-free arm again. I think in the end, it will all be worth it.”

Along with being a deaf-blind single mom, student and patient, Angie is also adding the task of co-founding an organization to her list of roles. Currently, Angie is in the process of forming the Northeast Ohio Deaf-Blind Association.

“The main goal is a way for people who are deaf-blind to go out, socialize, have fun,” Angie says. “It’s purely a social group.”

Regardless of whatever title someone can give Angie or her story, the root of everything is a mother’s love for her son. Throughout all the struggles, pain and complications, Angie says Joseph is the most important part of her life.

“He gives me my strength and power. He’s the reason I go on living.”
In his day, William Shakespeare wrote many a great tragedies: “Hamlet,” “Romeo and Juliet,” “Julius Cesar” and “Othello” to name a few. Not many could argue that anyone in history could write as eloquently as Shakespeare. Today, with one look at the usage of English, Shakespeare might simply say:

"OMG, WTF is going on!"

Standard English is under attack. Only this war is not being fought with guns, it’s being fought with cell phones and laptops. With the advent of the digital age, a new form of English called Short Message Service English, or SMS English, has grown. The use of character limits in text messages and social media like Twitter has seen users create different ways to get their points across. Everyday words and phrases have become a series of letters and numbers that only those with experience can decipher. Defenders of traditional English believe SMS language is ruining our beloved language.


“They are destroying it; pillaging our punctuation; savaging our sentences; raping our vocabulary,” his article says. “And they must be stopped.”

English professor Pamela Takayoshi, however, says bring it on.

Takayoshi leads a research group at Kent State University that is analyzing the usage of text talk. The group recently completed a study of a 32,000-word text corpus, or set of texts, of college students’ instant messaging exchanges. While the study focused mainly on analyzing the exchanges, there was one idea the group couldn’t ignore.

“We weren’t really interested in answering the question of whether texting and instant messaging was ruining the English language, but we found we had to answer it,” Takayoshi says. “There has been so much stuff published about (ruining English) in popular press mostly, but also kind of creeping into scholarly work. We just sort of felt that couldn’t be right.

“It seemed to us rather than ruining the English language, it was encouraging people to do a lot more with the English language,” she says. “It was expanding people’s uses. The time people spend writing has increased because they’re on instant messaging or their phones. I walk down the hall, and all I see is people doing reading and writing before they go into class.”

Most people wouldn’t think of SMS English as simply a written form of English no different than a research paper. Never before have young adults used the English language as they are now. With cell phones, Twitter and Facebook, more avenues to use English are opening up.

“I think it’s exciting to see how people have created these really interesting, entertaining, creative ways to write, to use language,” Takayoshi says. “And they’re doing it outside of school. They’re doing it for fun. They’re doing it for their friends. It’s exciting.

“People have this mistaken notion that writing standards are the way to write. And that erases the context or technology that you are using,” Takayoshi says. “It’s completely appropriate to write to your friends using a cell phone. You’re typing quickly. You’re using a short window. You’re tweeting 140 characters, and you’re out. You have to be creative to get that in there, and that’s completely appropriate. It is an art, and I think it’s a good exercise for writers to be in such control of their message that they have 140 characters or less. I think that’s good practice to be in control because it makes them aware of the particular words that they choose and which
ones are the best for that tiny space. Of course, we could be using something else in a few years, but it's all words.

Most of the old guard protecting Standard English might be worried that SMS English will replace our classic form of the language. With the amount of time students spend on their cell phones and online, the line between when to use proper English or informal English will become blurred. Submitted papers will turn into a mix of "lol's" and emoticons.

"I have a feeling that it is exaggerating that students come into our writing classes and don't know how to turn off the 'textese,' something like a teacher finding "u" instead of "you," but I haven't found that to be the case at all in my classes. I think if you make it clear to students what the purpose is and what the expectations are for writing in the academy, they know how to shift out of the 'textese.' I think the two will always be separate," Takayoshi says. English professor Uma Krishnan agreed, saying that very rarely has she ever graded student papers and read text talk in the paper. She says there is awareness on behalf of the student not to bring "textese" into the classroom.

Takayoshi also says that when she responds to student papers, she writes in the margins and uses a lot of text messaging abbreviations because they're in her head. It's quicker and easier for her. Her students know what she means when she writes the abbreviations.

English has undergone many transformations over centuries, and for Takayoshi, this is simply another for the language.

"Shakespeare's written form is not at all the written form we expect in our college writing classes. But then, neither is the text massaging," Takayoshi says. "You can see along the way evolutions of the language that are cultural, that are dependent on technologies. Printed pages used to come out not with so much white space and not so much indentations. It used to be one block of press. Then printing presses came out that created the ease with which we can space things out. Even the printed page is a pretty modern way of using text."

Krishnan believes that in addition to looking at the changes themselves, technology and culture should be taken into account.

"Things change," Krishnan says. "And what contributes to the change is what we need to look at. Why is there a change? Why is there an evolution? If you go to Europe, I see English and it's very prim and proper. But then I'm thinking, the more you go west, things are changing. So what is it? You come to the answer that it is basically culture."

Culture pushed one of the more recent battles between Standard English and a variant dialect. Back in the mid 90s, African American Vernacular English, or Ebonics, first stamped its place in the conscience of Americans. In Oakland, California, teachers wanted the school board to provide better training in AAVE, as most of the students spoke the dialect. The media eventually caught wind of the situation and acted as if this new language would ruin America's youth.

Takayoshi sees some similarities between Ebonics and SMS English.

"Ebonics is a pretty good parallel example because they're both rule-governed. They're just not following the rules of Standard English," Takayoshi says. "And so if they don't follow the rules of standard written English, there's no rules. Ebonics is black folk and texting has predominantly been young people. Two groups that are not in the dominant power structure."

Change is difficult for everyone, and change is often met with skepticism and resistance. Text speak is no different. Takayoshi says English professors would be very critical of text talk. Those professors would feel the English language is forever being tarnished and ruined.

"(English) is constantly evolving and anyone who tries to get in the way is a fuddy-duddy who deserves to be run down," Humphry's article says. "I agree. One of the joys of the English language and one of the reasons it has been so successful in spreading across the globe is that it is infinitely adaptable. The danger—for young people especially—is that they will come to dominate. Our written language may end up as a series of ridiculous emoticons and ever-changing abbreviations."

However, it is quite the opposite for Takayoshi.

"Linguists will say that languages that change are the ones that are healthy and vital," Takayoshi says. "When a language doesn't change and grow, that's a bad sign, so we tend to think this is a good sign."

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In the past 40 years, Kent State University has seen Tear Gas, Panty Raids, Madonna & Sinatra.

Alumni from four generations saw both tragedies and revolutions on the university's campus, and they say college is a much different experience today.

Flashback on the Flashes

Story by JESSICA WHITE

REX RAY, 69
CLASS OF 1967
MAJOR: Business Administration
CURRENT JOB: Career coach; Adjunct professor at Park University in Parkville, Mo.

When Rex Ray was in college, he had to walk miles to school in the snow, though not uphill both ways.

"I remember one time I had to take a history exam, and I couldn't get my car started because it was about 20-below-zero outside," Ray says. "I had to walk to campus, and when I got there I had to put my pen on the radiator because the ink was frozen!"

Ray says Kent State never closed its campus during the five years he was in school.

"The university was a lot less accommodating to students in those days," he says, chuckling.

But Kent State did satisfy students' thirst for '60s entertainment. He said he saw big names like Bill Cosby and Della Reese, and the university also sponsored performances by Bob Hope, Sammy Davis Jr. and Frank Sinatra.

There were also dances from 3 to 5 p.m. every Friday in the Student Union, then located in Oscar Ritchie Hall.

"We would rock that place," Ray says. "It was a fun place to be."

Later at night, the men would have occasional "panty raids."

"The guys would run through the dorms, try not to get caught and get as many panties as they could," he says. "Most of the girls encouraged it. They would throw their panties at them through the windows."

But Ray says for the most part, young ladies acted as ladies, and students in general showed manners and respect.

"It was more formal," he says. "Guys wore sport coats and dress shoes, and ladies wore skirts. It was a different world."
When Lee Kamps was in college, his father had little faith that he would make it through without screwing up.

“He let me know that if I ever got in trouble, or got some girl in trouble, my college career would end, and my military career would begin,” Kamps says. “He’d say, ‘I’m marching you right down to the recruiting office — you can pick which branch of the service you want to join.’

But Kamps said the craziest thing he ever did was watch the Apollo moon landing on live, late-night television on a school night.

“Nobody slept that night,” he says. “My class the next morning was an astronomy class that was taught by this old geezer-of-a-professor who had no idea what was going on!”

DENISE COULTER, 58
CLASS OF 1974
MAJOR: Early Childhood Education
CURRENT JOB: First-grade teacher at St. Mary of the Falls in Olmsted Falls

When Denise Coulter moved to campus in 1970, the area was still speckled with police in the aftermath of the May 4 shootings.

“Our parents had to be so scared,” she says. “But I was young; I wasn’t afraid of anything.”

Coulter said there were frequent student demonstrations, but most of them were peaceful.

“But when there’s alcohol involved, it stirs things up a little,” she says.

At the time, the drinking age was 18 and Coulter said many students spent their weekends at the bars. She remembers accidentally getting caught in the crowd of one riot downtown.

“(The police) were throwing smoke bombs to disperse the crowd,” she says. “It was scary because I thought about what had happened (May 4). You got a sense of how frightening that must have been.”

Aside from weekend trips to the bars, Coulter says she was largely enclosed on campus. No one had cell phones and few students had cars, so they often stayed in the dorms.

“It wasn’t the commuter campus it is today,” she says. “It forced you to become close to the people you lived with.”

Coulter lived in Allyn Hall, but said it was much different than it is today.

“There were three of us in that little room, and one microwave per floor,” she says. “And it still wasn’t co-ed — my roommate used to have to sneak guys in.”

Coulter said there were strict rules about when men were allowed in the building.

“When the custodian was in the hall, he would shout, ‘Man in the hall!’ so you wouldn’t walk out of the room in your underwear,” she says with a laugh. “Things have come a long way since then.”

Photos courtesy of Denise Coulter
Deb Evans, Coulter and Linda Morrell stand together in 1974.

Coulter stands in front of the Kent State arch with her girlfriends on a reunion trip.
MARGIE KRALOVICH, 46
CLASS OF 1988
MAJOR: Education, minor in mathematics
CURRENT JOB: Information technology business analyst for Optum Health

Margie Kralovich grew up in a small town, so when she came to Kent State, she didn’t know what to expect.

“The very beginning of school, for the 75th anniversary, they gave everyone paint for this canvas and we painted ourselves more than the canvas!” Kralovich says, laughing. “It was crazy to me. Coming from a small town, I’d never done anything like that.”

Kent was the biggest city Kralovich lived in since growing up, and it opened her eyes to a world outside her own. She said she remembers seeing the space shuttle Challenger disaster — the first national tragedy she had witnessed — on a TV in the Student Center.

“I remember coming up after my lab, and everyone was standing around that TV just staring at it,” she says. “I’ll always remember where I was when that happened.”

But the TV didn’t always broadcast bad news. Kralovich says she also remembers watching Madonna’s “Like A Virgin” music video when it was released.

“Of course we could only see it on TV because we didn’t have computers yet,” she says. Kralovich and most of her friends had electric typewriters, much different from the laptops most of us now own.

“There was one person in my dorm who had a word processor, and we thought that was so cool,” she says.

Kralovich is now a graduate student in Florida, and she says she’s had to adjust to using the Internet for assignments.

“I wrote a paper and I didn’t even have to go to the library!” she exclaims. “And if you have a question, you can just e-mail the professor without having to go to the office. With technology, interactions have certainly changed.”

Photo courtesy of Margie Kralovich
Kralovich stands at a recent event, Raise the Roof, earlier this year.

ANDREA WRIGHT, 41
CLASS OF 1991
MAJOR: Business Administration
CURRENT JOB: Administrator

Andrea Wright describes herself as the proudest Kent State alumna living in the state of Michigan.

“I have Kent State stuff all over my house,” she says. “I have stickers on my car, on my front door — I’ve dressed my daughter in Kent State gear since she was a baby.”

Wright says school pride was strong when she was a student, too.

“We would wear our Kent State T-shirts and sweatshirts all the time,” she says. “That’s what everyone would wear in the late ’80s — jeans, sweatshirts and tennis shoes.”

Much of Wright’s pride came from her involvement in Black United Students and student senate, which is now Undergraduate Student Government. The year she was elected into student senate made history because Wright was the first black female executive director. It was also the first time that minority students made up the majority of the group.

“That year was just phenomenal,” she says. “I was elected unanimously by the senators, and I felt such a great sense of accomplishment and pride.”

Student government prepared Wright for her career as a city administrator, but she said her love for Kent State has inspired her to seek an administrative position in higher education.

“It’s all because of the fond memories and positive impact that Kent State made on me,” she says. “I think the pride is something that will never go away — that, and the black squirrels.”
Chaz and Eleni Deering laugh with their son, Dimitri, as they share the story of how they met. Both worked at Lowe's in their hometown, Mentor, and got married a year after they met. When Chaz and Eleni Deering applied for jobs at Lowe's in the summer of 2008, love may not have been on their minds. But three years later, the pair is married and raising their son. For the Deerings, it is all about balance. Chaz is enrolled at Kent State in the ROTC program and Eleni runs a gluten-free baking business. They credit their faith and their loved ones with giving them the strength to keep the young family moving.
Chaz is a senior in the ROTC program at Kent State. Eleni, who stays home with Dimitri, 1, runs a gluten-free baking business out of their apartment at Allerton Student and Family Housing.

Aside from being a member of the ROTC, a father, a husband and a student, Chaz also works part time for Kent State’s Dining Services. “It’s hard to get personal one-on-one time (with Eleni),” he says.

Eleni says sometimes it’s not easy to be a stay-at-home mom. She says she wakes up happy every day, thankful that God brought along a man like Chaz to take care of her.
Eleni’s Greek family had a large influence on Dimitri’s name. Chaz wanted to name his son after himself, but Greek tradition says children must be named after their grandfathers. Although they don’t have the same name, their baby pictures are identical. Even now, Dimitri has his father’s light, blonde hair and pale, blue eyes.

Eleni and Chaz attend Bible study Wednesday evenings in the Student Center. The members take time at the beginning of each session to greet each other.
Jesse Moore, one of the group leaders, plays with Dimitri before the study begins. Many of the members take turns interacting with him during discussions.

When Dimitri starts to act up, Chaz takes him out in the hall to calm him down. At first, Eleni wasn't fond of Chaz joining the military, but she says she spent a lot of time praying to God and her perspective changed. "I look at it as an adventure," she says. "We're getting paid to immerse ourselves in different cultures."

Eleni has always been religious, and although Chaz didn't go to church when he was growing up, he says Eleni brought him closer to God. Now, he goes on mission trips with his Bible study group even when Eleni can't go with him.

Eleni says Dimitri is a curious boy. He spends the majority of the Bible study crawling around, touching and playing with everything in his path.
Xu Chuang Cheng guides 32 Shanghai tourists through the land of Jiapeng, a small, unmarked village west of the big city.

In the Shadows of Shanghai

Story and photos by BEN WOLFORD

During a spring break trip to China with the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, writer Ben Wolford decided to break away from his group for a couple of days. His journey to the lonely, forgotten town of Jiapeng revealed more about China than he expected.

Jiapeng doesn’t exist on maps.
But it’s there, wedged as it has been for 700 years in the cracks of the jagged Southern Anhui Mountains, west of Shanghai.

The quaint collection of old gray buildings looks like an import from other ancient towns in Italy or Spain. A few are marked, though, with the blue paint of a positively Chinese trademark: China Mobile. Even the Jiapengs of the world are 3G covered.

The journey from Shanghai is a six-hour plunge into an unaffected place, touched only peripherally by China’s explosive economic growth. One road leads to Jiapeng. No roads lead to the next village, only a rocky footpath that’s steep and uneven. It’s too slick now from a weekend of March rain to make it very far through the mountains to get there.

But 32 Shanghai tourists, eager for two days of relief from frantic city life, aren’t going to let rain spoil a good mountain climb. They have already paid their S82 (just shy of the monthly minimum wage in rural Anhui Province) for the packaged bus tour. They want to see the countryside and the little yellow rapeseed flowers blanketing the terraced foothills of the mountains around Jiapeng.

There’s not much time to explore the city, but some of them do. Jiapeng is agrarian and peaceful. The residents stare at you. Chickens roam freely. Trash is everywhere: in the waterways, along embankments, in the streets.

One of the tourists from Shanghai, Julie Xu, asks one of the villagers where she can find something interesting to see. He points her up a hill. From there she’ll turn left and see “six bridges and seven beautiful sights,” he tells her. It seems unlikely that Jiapeng could have six bridges, let alone more than a couple of beautiful sights. Lesson: Trust the locals. Six ornamented concrete bridges span a river that runs through the center of the town, slopping over litter. The beautiful sights are less immediately identifiable, but with sharply rising mountains looming under a blue sky from all directions, there is beauty in general.

After a little while, the tourists load their lunches in backpacks and head out to explore the countryside.

The guide is 74. His hair is neat, and
his face is creased and papery, but thin and handsome. His name is Xu Chuang Cheng. Mr. Xu shares his name with all the other residents of the village, which could scarcely be more than 200. The name Xu, learns Julie Xu (no relation), was once held by a nobleman during some distant feudal time. The men of that community took Xu's name, and their posterity have retained it and remained until today. Xu (pronounced like "shoe") was also the name of a 20th century martyr named Xu Jiapeng. The town is named after him. Xu died fighting United States soldiers in the Korean War, and the villagers credit him for victory in a critical battle.

When the U.S. had driven the Communist forces nearly to the Chinese border, China rushed in troops to fight them back. Xu Jiapeng was one of them. He was 22 on July 6, 1953, when his battalion attacked the Americans on so-called Pork Chop Hill by surprise that night. They say he threw himself in front of an enemy machine gun, clutching it, taking hundreds of bullets to his chest while his comrades took the hill.

There’s an obelisk now — a memorial to his heroism — overlooking Xu Jiapeng’s hometown.

The tourists from Shanghai look at it for a little while and take some photos. Mr. Xu, the old guide, says the government might start charging visitors to come here. Then they argue about whether climbing a mountain is a good idea in damp weather. They ultimately decided go ahead with the climb.

Just below the inaccessible summit of the 1,100-meter-high mountain, Mr. Xu inches to the edge of the cliff. He looks out over clouds and peaks like Friedrich’s Wanderer, surveying his seldom-seen domain. Then he takes a cigarette from his coat and squints to the distance.

When the day is over, the group returns to Jiapeng and crams into a room with three circular tables. They look at each other and talk — a lawyer, an artist, a biology student, a mechanical engineer. Some of them know each other and joke about finding the mechanical engineer’s girlfriend.

After dinner — fresh vegetables, chicken, pork, soup — they play a card game, Murder. Then they go to bed.

The next day it rains, and the town’s narrow concrete footpaths turn charcoal colored and muddy. A river that cuts under the six ornamented bridges rushes faster and louder in the shower. Children played basketball the day before in the town square, near the police station and the population control center, and they called out “Michael Jordan!” and “LeBron James!” when they saw the group of tourists. They aren’t playing this morning.

The tour group, however, is unwilling to stay indoors. Though clouds threaten to burst overhead, they haven’t seen the fields of rapeseed flowers. They grab their cameras and raincoats.

On the way to the terrace steps, a man named Tony spouts realities about the Chinese government as only an expatriate would. He’s from China, but he lives in San Francisco. He’s a software developer starting a new business in Shanghai, so he’s visiting. Tony’s wide frame plods over the centuries-old stone footpath. “Look at that building,” he huffs and points at a building that isn’t dirty and gray like the rest of them. It’s the clean, white police station. “You can recognize a government building.”

The local politicians are corrupt, he says. They can be bought. Companies defy regulations and, for example, put lead in paint, he says. “I wanted to raise my girls in the United States because the quality of living is better there,” he says. Statistics back him. World Health Organization figures say children in China are almost three times as likely as American children to die before 5. Then, like other Chinese are apt to do when speaking critically about their homeland, Tony shrugs his shoulders and nods his head: “But,” he says, “things are getting better.”

Tony stops talking and catches his breath. He’s quiet for a long time and then drops back to talk to someone else.

A sprawling valley of yellow comes into view. The rapeseed flowers cover the terraces that are etched into the mountain. The yellow is unreal against the grayish brown colors of the rainy day. The girls wade into the fields, brushing their fingertips on the flowers. Then they look back over their shoulders to pose for photographs. Everyone huddles for a group picture as it begins to pour.

They sleep on the ride home. In six hours, they’re in downtown Shanghai, insignificant to 20 million people around them. They say “nice to meet you” and “hope to see you soon” and disappear down the streets or the subway.

Shanghai sprouted skyscrapers in just two decades. Other Chinese cities are following suit. But Jiapeng hasn’t changed. Sure, it gained cars and motorcycles, televisions and 3G-coverage. The market sells Snickers bars. The children know about LeBron James.

Thirty-two tourists from Shanghai don’t care about those things, though. They came to climb a mountain and look at flowers.
Marc Frankel and Alia Awadallah met in their History of Fascism class last semester.

They were sitting near each other on the first day of class, and the professor asked everyone to say something about him or herself. Frankel went first. He told the class that he was a dual citizen and had been drafted into the Israeli army. Next it was Awadallah’s turn. She turned to the class and announced that she was also a dual citizen, but she was a Palestinian.

“People were like ‘Oh no, get them away from each other,’” Awadallah says. “But we were fine.”

They were actually more than fine. They started talking and quickly added each other on Facebook. In the end, both dropped the class, but it was the catalyst of their friendship.
It wasn’t long before the two realized that they actually had a lot in common. Growing up in religious homes, it wasn’t that surprising that they shared similar moral values. Both grew up as dual citizens traveling to their own homelands.

That’s where some people may start to question the friendship. They share the same homeland — kind of. It’s their homelands, or homeland, depending on how you look at it, that make their friendship seem unlikely to some.

It’s a homeland their ancestors have been fighting over for more than a hundred years. Since the 1900s, the history of the land loosely known as Palestine and Israel has been filled with mandates, immigration waves, declarations, battles, redrawing boundaries, shifting leaders, displaced people, uprisings, deaths and tragedies. The land was mandated to Great Britain in 1916, who promised it to both the Arabs and the Jews. The conflict escalated from there.

These are two groups of people who need a place to call home, and over the years have not been able to reach a peaceful agreement of whose home is where.

Despite their backgrounds, Frankel and Awadaallah were excited to meet someone else with comparable knowledge about the conflict they could talk to. Even though they completely disagreed, the issue broke the ice and gave them something to talk about. Ironically, the thing people assume would drive them apart is what ultimately brought them together.

The pair commented that on campus they don’t really meet a lot of people outside of Palestinians and Jews that really know about the conflict, and even then it’s a select few.

“It’s not an issue that everyone knows about or is interested in, so when you meet someone who is so involved in it, even if you’re arguing, you like having someone who knows about the subject,” Awadaallah says.

“To try and formulate new opinions and bounce ideas off of,” Frankel adds.

“We were just like ‘hey! … enemy,’” Awadaallah jokes as she glances at Frankel. “I mean he’s not so bad.”

Frankel, sophomore history major and Jewish studies minor, was born and raised in Cleveland. He grew up an Orthodox Jew.

He enrolled at Kent State this summer after attending the college of Judaic and Samaria in Israel while serving his mandatory time in the Israeli military. Because he chose to be an Israeli citizen, he was required to serve in the Israeli Defense Force. He left right after high school to fulfill his duties.

“I’ve been on the front lines, I’ve seen some of these things happen,” he says. “It escalated very easily because it’s a very touchy subject. Both sides care very much about their homeland, and I don’t think anybody wants to fight.”

Awadaallah, senior political science major, was born in Jordan but grew up outside of Youngstown. She spent many summers overseas visiting family and friends. Her area of specialty is Middle Eastern conflict, which is the focus of her senior thesis.

The two have had long debates about the conflict and politics and know that it’s something they will never agree on.

“We’re inherently hardwired to one side or the other,” Frankel says. “We’re going to disagree by virtue of our life experiences.”

Awadaallah thinks that even so, today young people are more exposed to both sides.

“I do think we’ve become more understanding of each other and have better relationships with the other side than our parents did,” she says.

The conflict is so complex that it’s hard to find any two people who completely agree with one another, even if they are on the same “side,” she says.

Although they have such different opinions, the tension between Frankel and Awadaallah only happens when they’re talking about the conflict.

Anyone who might happen to drop in on a debate between them would have a hard time believing the two are friends. What starts off as a polite conversation about the conflict quickly escalates into a heated argument where facts, figures and fast-fingered Google searches on their smart phones all come into play.

Frankel compares the argument to another popular argument: Droid or iPhone. You could argue about which one is better all day, and each person will still think his or her phone is superior. Coincidentally, he has a Droid and Awadaallah has an iPhone.

Awadaallah doesn’t shy away from debate. She thinks it’s important that the two aren’t afraid to argue about the issue.

“I can just ignore Marc and be like ‘Oh you don’t agree with me so I want nothing to do with you,’” she says. “But then that’s just two more people who have totally opposite views that aren’t willing to discuss things and can’t possibly come to resolution on certain issues.”

“That’s just going to make it worse,” she says.

Frankel said he thinks both sides are right and wrong, but by talking about it they can see things from each other’s perspectives.

He may have been in the Israeli army, but that doesn’t define who he is.

If you asked him who Marc Frankel is, he wouldn’t say an Israeli soldier. He’d tell you that Marc Frankel is a guy that likes to hang out, watch movies and listen to music.

Awadaallah agrees. She recognizes that although she cares a lot about the conflict, it doesn’t take over her personality. When she’s with Frankel and other Jewish friends it isn’t always at the forefront.

Their passion for their homeland is what started their friendship, but there is more to it than that. When they aren’t discussing it out about politics, they interact just like anyone else. There are plenty of other things for them to talk about.

For instance, they hate the same music. Neither of them can stand hip-hop with degrading lyrics or Kesha. It all goes back to their upbringing and moral values.

Aside from the music they don’t listen to, they talk about life, class, significant others and wedding planning.

“A lot of us have a lot in common. We get along, and we have nothing personal against each other,” she said. “It’s just when you start talking about something so controversial and politicized there’s going to be some tension and some disagreement.”

As the end of their time at Kent State approaches, the fate of their friendship is uncertain. Will these two stay pals even when they aren’t running into each other on a regular basis?

“I definitely see us staying in touch,” Awadaallah said. “It won’t be as much like we won’t run into each other on campus.”

They are confident the power of Facebook will allow them to remain friends even after they move on with their lives.

Frankel and Awadaallah are an Israeli and a Palestinian, but they are also Americans. They are normal college students. Like many friends, they just happen to disagree on a certain issue. They were born to be enemies in the eyes of many, yet somehow managed to form a friendship. This is just one of many friendships between Israelis and Palestinians.

A friendship that shows a skeptical world that a Palestinian and an Israeli can make peace. B

“Ironically, the thing people assume would drive them apart is what ultimately brought them together.”
TAKE IT OFF, BARE YOUR SOLE

Story and photos by MICHELLE BAIR

Ramsey jogs barefoot on the street no matter what the weather conditions may entail.

To wear shoes or not to wear shoes? It has jogged through the minds of Kent State Track and Cross County members, Harvard doctors, physical therapists and optimistic runners across the nation. It's proving to be the free and natural trend, an alternative since the human race took its first steps.

Though its benefits and levels of the activity fluctuate, running barefoot is a form of training that allows people to experience the foot's full movement that shoes limit. On the other hand, barefoot running doesn't provide adequate protection against broken glass and frostbite, two serious and dangerous risks—which is where barefoot running shoes fall into the trend. Vibram FiveFingers and Nike Frees are two kinds that allow runners to experience the motion of barefoot running without the risk of abrasions and weather hazards.

FROM CALIFORNIA TO OHIO

One particular Ohio barefoot runner, Alex Ramsey, embraces the shoeless lifestyle, and he was thrilled on a February day when a construction worker noticed he was running without his shoes.

"Hey, doesn't that hurt your feet?" he asks.
"No, actually it feels great," Ramsey responds.
"You know, I heard about a guy in California doing that," the construction worker says.
"Oh really," Ramsey says. "Do you by chance remember his name?"
"Barefoot... Ken," says the worker. "Ken Bob?"
"Ah," Ramsey says. "The pioneer of barefoot running; the author of thebarefootrunning.org."

The website was launched in 1997, and Barefoot Ken Bob Saxton has run more than 70 marathons barefoot. He mentors new unshod runners throughout barefoot clinics around the nation. Ramsey says Saxton is his inspiration and role model. Benefits are described as scientific, physiological and sometimes psychological as endorphins kick in. The immediate difference that someone recognizes when shedding the shoe is the placement of the foot when it hits the ground.

"When wearing a shoe, we are inclined to land on our heel," Ramsey says. "This attributes to the over-cushioned shoes that are pushed on us by the leading shoe manufacturers."

He says the force of impact exerted when our heels hit the ground is instantly sent to the tendons, ligaments, bones and muscles that occupy our feet, lower leg and back.
If we take off our shoes, our bodies naturally align without biomechanics, Ramsey says. “Instead of landing on our heels, barefoot running or walking enables us to land on our forefoot. Exhibiting this landing dispels the impact to a larger surface area.”

Ramsey says the more people understand barefoot running is something we can naturally do, the more we will find it’s easy to look at shoes in a different way.

“And so many people rely on a shoe as their protector and their servant against everything,” he says. “But if you look at the overwhelming statistic of people that are injured throughout the year from running injuries or anything running-related: Plantar Fasciitis, messed up ankles, knees... you realize there has to be some sort of correlation between shoes and running. So I think the question you’ve got to ask is: Do you want to spend your lifetime hurt and unconnected, or do you want to experience natural form and the possibility of less injuries?”

In Ramsey’s room is a bed sandwiched between two shelves stacked with books of all sorts; Most of which involve creative thinking, the power of not conforming and of course, barefoot running. Next to Ramsey’s alarm clock sits the book “Born to Run,” by Christopher McDougall, which explores the emergence and subculture of barefoot running.

The book cites the Tarahumara Indians who occupy the Copper Canyons in northern Mexico: A civilization and tribe of people who live with minimal obesity, heart disease, any forms of cancer or anything that defines us here in the United States.

“They are known to run upwards of 50 miles a day, barefoot or in huarache sandals,” Ramsey says.

Huarache sandals are a thin layer of leather and tire tread or anything the Tarahumara Indians can find. Barefoot running supporters recognize the Tarahumara Indians as super athletes, and Ramsey credits them for spurring his interest to run barefoot.

Brian Poludniak, head doctor of physical therapy at Health Solution Centers in Vermilion, says he knows people who love barefoot running.

He says if it is done properly, it is good for feet and ankles because shoes don’t allow us to use all of our muscles, thus making us weak, which can expose us to injury. Shoes also interfere with our foot’s natural movement and walking style they were designed for.

“I would only recommend this style of running to a select crowd because it can cause more harm than good to some people,” Poludniak says. “The person must be in good shape, be aware of proper running style and posture, have no history of pre-existing foot or ankle injuries and must work their way up in intensity and distance.”

He says it is essential that it be done on the proper surface like padded track, flat grass, or firm, smooth sand—thus naturally exfoliating the feet.

Poludniak recommends a safer option or start into barefoot running: Vibram FiveFingers, a special shoe that is designed as a barrier to protect the foot from hazards.

KENT RUNNERS BARE THEIR SOLES

Local runners have incorporated barefoot running into their training regime, some using Vibram FiveFingers and Nike Free shoes.

Kent State Track & Field and Cross Country team member Scott Hilditch runs with Nike Frees, proclaiming they are the best of both worlds between barefoot running and shoes.

CRITICISMS AND LIEBERMAN’S RESPONSES:

It’s a fad.

“As an evolutionary biologist, I can say that the fad is wearing shoes.”

You can’t do it on hard surfaces like concrete.

“Nonsense. Our 2010 Nature paper showed that barefoot runners typically land without any measurable impact collision, so one doesn’t need any shoe to protect the sole of the foot from impact. If you run with proper form, shoes are only necessary to protect against abrasion and friction. Barefoot runners will tell you that the most comfortable, easiest surfaces to run on are smooth hard ones like a well paved road.”

Many runners are now getting injured from barefoot running.

“This may be true because lots of people are now barefoot running, although I’ve seen no data, and it’s regrettable. However, runners will always get injured to some extent, and the question should be whether barefoot runners, that is ones who are good barefoot runners, are getting injured at higher rates than shod runners. I doubt it. A conservative estimate of injury rates among shod runners is that 30 percent [of them] per year get overuse injuries. These injury levels are unacceptable, but where is the hue and cry against shoes?”
“Nike Frees look more like a shoe than the Vibram FiveFingers,” he says. “But they are still flexible enough to mimic barefoot running.”

Hilditch, a senior education major, says he walks at a footwear store called Second Sole in Akron. The store has chains all throughout Northeast Ohio, and there are plans for one to open near Kent’s campus between Starbucks and Campus Book & Supply.

Hilditch has been running for 10 years and says he believes in the benefits of barefoot running in moderation to strengthen lower limbs and muscle tendons.

“It’s a good supplemental tool to running overall,” Hilditch says. “Instead of shoe versus barefoot, keep it moderate and in the middle for a long, healthy and injury-free running experience.”

Anthony Jordanek, Kent State Track & Field and Cross Country alumnus, says he feels that barefoot running is and always will be the only way to run to your potential and be the most efficient.

“But after training your whole life in a shoe, it’s only asking for injury,” he says. “Unless of course, you have the time and patience...you may see results.”

Jordanek has been running competitively since seventh grade and has known Ramsey since high school. “We met through track and field and have been friends and competitors since.”

Jordanek says he supplements barefoot running into his running routine as a way to conclude his workout.

“I do barefoot run, but only during the easiest parts of my training regimen,” he says. “I use barefoot running to strengthen my feet during my cool-down runs, which follow my workouts.”

Jordanek says he averages about 60-70 miles a week, and he usually spends about four to six of those miles barefoot.

Nick Giomuso, a senior electronic media production major, says he read about Vibram FiveFingers in a magazine.

“My second cousin, Clay, ‘The Carpenter’ Guida, has two pairs and does his UFC training in them,” Giomuso says. “They seem to work, he is one of the best. He told me to stop researching and buy a pair, so I did.”

He says it was tough the first few times he ran with Vibram FiveFingers.

“You definitely feel your calves burn,” Giomuso says. “But that quickly went away. Other than that it feels different, like you are running in socks.”

A Harvard professor slams the scoffs with sprint responses

Daniel E. Lieberman, professor of human evolutionary biology at Harvard University, has been studying and publishing on the evolution of running for years.

Since humans ran barefoot for millions of years, he says he became interested in how barefoot running works and differs from shod running.

Lieberman says most of the criticisms he has heard about barefoot running “are based on preconceptions, ignorance and faulty logic.”

He says barefoot running is a way to learn how your body is supposed to work, and it’s an excellent training tool. One must pay attention to form, and that many barefoot runners seem to receive the best results by using a high cadence of 180 steps per minute, landing with the feet below the hips — more toward the ball of the foot, but with a gentle angle. He says for barefoot runners to not run on their toes, to relax the entire body and to lean forward at the ankle, not the waist. He says this will keep the trunk upright.

“If it hurts, STOP! Pain is signal that you are doing something wrong,” Lieberman says.

Ramsey says he realizes the dangerous risks that come with barefoot running. He’s stepped on glass and experienced frostbite, but he considers them to be learning experiences.

He says his biggest fear and worry is that those ambitious enough to start their own barefoot journey will not take the proper precautions to transition from shoes to unshod running.

“We have to remember that our feet have been held captive by foot coffins,” he says. “Shoes have made our legs, ankles and feet extremely weak. It takes time to build these muscles, tendons and ligaments to sustain our body weight.”

Ramsey says that without a conscious training program, making the switch to barefoot running could lead to injuries. It took him four months of consistent training to be able to handle a three-mile run.

Ramsey, otherwise known as Barefoot Alex (from his blog, barefootalex.com), will be running shoeless at the Flying Pig Marathon in Cincinnati on May 1. This is the 13th year of the race, and he will be the first to run it barefoot. Ramsey says his barefoot running journey started in May 2010. “It is ironic that a year later I will be running a distance of 26.2 miles on its anniversary. It will be a remarkable present to give to myself.”

COOL DOWN

Regardless of where you stand, the barefoot running trend has something to teach us. On several degrees, barefoot running changes the way we view the value of a shoe, the foot’s anatomy and an ideal balance of efficiency and strength, varying from Kent students who run with Vibram FiveFingers to the Tarahumara Indians in Mexico. Whether we enjoyed it as children, train with it or simply wondered what those weird shoes are that resemble a pair of toe socks, the trend is growing—some food for thought the next time you go to drop $100 on a pair of tennis shoes. B

Ramsey runs barefoot through the streets of Cincinnati.
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32 THE BURR SPRING 2011
was late to class. All around me, the kids looked like Christmas had been canceled. The professor walked up and down the rows dropping blue books as he went. When one landed on the desk of the girl next to me, she looked like she was going to puke. She stared at it like it was an organ in a jar.

“What is this about?” I asked with a spooky calm.

“The midterm.” She looked at me like I was an organ in a jar.

“No shit?” Now the entire class was looking at me the same way. “Man, I totally forgot.” I gingerly took out a pencil and dug in.

This was the best part of my day, after all. Jess was at home with a pretty nasty case of the ole Ovarian Cancer. A surprise midterm seemed like a lazy Saturday watching Looney Tunes compared to being at home.
I didn’t have much of a life before I knew Jess. That is not exaggeration; I literally wasn’t on this earth for very long when we first crossed paths. Jess and I rode the same bus to grade school starting in the second grade. She was actually in the first grade, so I was way too cool to acknowledge her existence, but she was there, toe headed and buried behind glasses thicker than the safety glass they use on basement windows. For me, she would still have been a catch; the me with the three missing teeth, speech impediment, pigeon-toed feet; the me who still sometimes weakly emerges under the strain of harsh criticism or a bullying tone.

Years passed, miles grew between us. She lost the glasses. Actually, she donated them to NASA and they now make up over fifty percent of the Hubble space telescope’s advanced lenses (of course I’m kidding). My teeth grew in; I learned to properly say the letter ‘r’. Pubescence sprung on us with a whole new set of awkward deficiencies, and we met again. She was lovely, long and blond, skinny and funny, smarter than me in every way. I liked her, in the off-putting way of a strong sensibility (of course I’m kidding). My sex life went to stage three, I moved to Texas and from the North, I took a deep breath and swore off love forever. I spent the next three years celibate, dodging women like bullets. That’s the way I choose to remember it, at least.

Every now and then, my mother would tell me that a pretty young artist had told her to tell me hello. I didn’t recognize her last name, she had gotten married, I assumed it was just another stalker following me online. She sent me a friend request on a social network and I turned her down, saying that I was only friends with people who I was actually friends with. I did this with some trepulation, having browsed through her pictures, but that was my policy, and the years without sex had made it fairly easy to ignore a beguiling smile. Jess told me who she was and I excepted her online friendship gladly.

From the very beginning, we wrote every night. She was divorced, a new love-hater, and I welcomed her to our ranks. As the days bled into weeks, I found myself checking the computer earlier and earlier. If there was no new message, I would read the old one, take it apart, look for any sign that she was thawing like me. There were never any misspellings, there was never any lazy internet shorthand, every message read like a letter on paper. She never said I.LOL, which may have been a deal breaker at that early stage. What we didn’t know was that as our feelings for each other grew, something else was growing as well.

She avoided me for months before finally agreeing to meet me at a local dive bar. When she walked in, my life as I had known it was over. Most of her head was shaved, she had a pokey blond Mohawk, and she was still the most feminine creature there. She didn’t see me, and I let her walk by my booth. I needed a second to say goodbye to my old life. I actually thought that at the time. How rare to see things as they truly are when they are happening. She turned around and looked at me and I exhaled years of bitterness and cynicism in a single “hello.”

The first kiss was in her driveway. I fought the urge to chew her face off. If you think that sounds crazy, you have never been in love. We got a place together, a hellhole with a landlord and a basement that were both usually full of crap. Things were good.

A year later, she got sick. Jess was 27 years old, a drug-free nonsmoking vegetarian. I eat meat every day, smoked for a decade, practically lobbied the universe for cancer. By some cosmic spin of a roulette wheel, it went to her instead.

It started with pain in her abdomen. The problems were misdiagnosed as ovarian cysts, a fairly common, but painful, malady. It was as if she walked into a hospital with a bullet in her head and was told that it was a headache, go home and take some Advil. After months and several hospital visits, the truth was revealed. Her gynecologist, the one who had misdiagnosed her, stood in front of her parents and me, hat in hand, and told us to get a good oncologist.

It was stage three. Her oncologist sounded like a radio ad for a closing Saturn dealership.

“Fifty percent chance of survival! Everything must go!”

The surgery was arduous, the recovery seemed like a dark lifetime.

“But wait, there’s more! Buy a Saturn today and I will throw in six months of intensive chemotherapy! No money down! I will even throw in a free Beyonce wig!”

When they pulled out her reproductive system, they added some new hardware. A port is a temporary diaphragm, made of rubber and metal that is inserted inside the chest to allow smoother and more complete insertion of chemo medicines. The outline of the apparatus is clearly visible through the skin. It’s wild; “We are going to take these ovaries, but don’t worry, we left you a little extra something: Just think of it as a third nipple.”

There are places where everything is

“I watched the person I love more than anything suffer horribly, every day professing that love while being secretly afraid to feel it, every day feeling more alone in the world.”

Mark snaps a photo of Jess modeling her bald head.
more real, pockets where we can’t hide from the truth. A room crowded with oncology patients getting chemotherapy is one of those places. I have been in cathedrals, stood within Stonehenge. When it comes to spiritual strength, these piles of rocks don’t have anything on Tri-County Oncology and Hematology. It is a shrine to the temporary and fleeting nature of life, and the coffee is always fresh.

Before Jess got sick, I was in the clinic on business. I could feel the eyes of the damned on me. I felt pity for the patients, lined up in rows reading magazines and watching soap operas while young nurses hooked them to machines and attempted to poison the death out of them. Once Jess was a patient there I understood something about the people hooked to those tubes; they were more alive than I have ever been. While I looked at them with pity, they were looking through me. I was just another shell, wasting my life by not loving it as much as I should.

When I think about that place now, I can smell the German chocolate blend coffee and I can see Jess in that chair, tubes poking out, throwing up gang signs for the camera.

Work was a daily exercise in Zen. A customer would call with a complaint or the boss would lash out and I had to fight the urge to smile. It was like watching children argue about something ridiculous and having to pretend that what they are saying is important. “Don’t you care that you are two minutes late?” I didn’t, of course, but I wished that I did. All I wanted in the world was to care about the insignificant things that plague most people.

School was my escape, a universe outside of cancer, or as much outside as possible. My professors were understanding and kind, only occasionally looking at me like an unknown specter carrying an unknowable weight. My grades stayed good, in spite of the fact that I didn’t buy a textbook for three semesters. I still don’t remember much of what I learned in class, except in odd flashbacks. Even now, sometimes during dinner I will look up and proclaim something like “Did you know John Wilkes Booth was in Harper’s Ferry when John Brown was hanged?” I don’t remember learning that, but I bet it’s true! I was the only ghost on the dean’s list.

My classmates’ reaction was slightly different from my professors. I always make at least one male friend in each class, but the dudes all avoided me as though my emotional fragility was contagious. They looked at me like I was in Fight Club, an unstable element that just wasn’t worth their time. The girls, some of whom I had classes with before the cancer, seemed to gravitate towards me. When they saw me, some primal Mommy Button was pressed in them and a loudspeaker rumbled in their heads, “I must take care of him, right now!” Hey guys, want to meet women? Add some tragedy to your life, you will be irresistible. I just wanted to be left alone. After a while, I was, at which point I was lonely. I was going more than a little crazy.

I got an A on the exam that I hadn’t studied for. For those semesters, I got mostly As. It was as though my professors, God bless them, knew that the education I was getting at school paled in comparison to the one I was getting at home. I think they also knew that I needed school. I was a caretaker for her, and they were caretakers for me. They also knew that somehow I was learning the material.

Back at home, her hair started to fall out and rather than let her blindness go quietly she shaved her head. “You can’t fire me, I quit,” she told the universe, that spinner of roulette wheels, and that act of defiance made me love her even more. I saw for the first time the steel in her, the fire that couldn’t be extinguished by surgery or chemo. I felt like kissing her like I did in her driveway. I felt like a coward. I can’t sleep for days before a dentist appointment, at the first sign of a cold I wave a white flag and reach for the NyQuil. I looked at her, standing before the horror unfazed. She was like Joan of Arc with shorter hair. All I could offer was laughter.

Humor was our armor. I did my best to maintain the facade of a sunny and light outlook. My father had given me great advice if I have to cry, do it in the shower. To this day, the smell of panic and fear is the piquant aroma of Irish Spring. The little boy with the pigeon toes and three missing teeth emerged in the shower to fret about the girl with the thick glasses. I was watching the person I love more than any other suffering horribly, every day professing that love while being secretly afraid to feel it, everyday feeling more alone in the world. What kind of person wouldn’t laugh in that situation?

One night, she dozed with her glasses on top of her head. When I glanced over, I nearly had a heart attack. The way her glasses sat, it looked like she was a person with no face, glasses floating oddly on a blank pink plane. It was an amazing metaphor for what cancer does to a person, and it was hilarious. I took a picture, I had to, she had to see this. When her nap was over I showed it to her, she laughed, and we had an impromptu photo shoot, her modeling her blank face, me spouting out commands in a terrible French accent. “That’s it, now show me naughty! Beautiful!” We laughed and then I took a nice long shower.

Every chance I got, I would don one of her many wigs. The Beyoncé is a classic choice for any classy lady looking to cover her cancer. The girls, some of whom I had classes with and who now wished that I did. All I wanted in the world was to care about the insignificant things that plague most people.

Two years have passed, faster than the mind and heart can comprehend. There have been no signs of cancer since the end of her chemotherapy. Maybe the universe isn’t such a sick bastard, after all.

When it was happening, I thought that this experience would totally change me, make me somehow immune to the tragedy I had seen, the little black dress of cancer wear. Whatever the outcome, it was going to be a long time before either one of us got better, if we ever would.

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When it was happening, I thought that this experience would totally change me, make me somehow immune to the fears of the average person. If she survived, I pictured myself rejoicing in every minute of life like a scarred Buddha. Of course, that hadn’t been the case. My nightmares have slowly reverted from watching my love waste away to things like forgetting about work or showing up to class and finding out there is a midterm I haven’t studied for. In short, I care about the insignificant things again, and that’s alright. For some of us, sweating the small stuff is a sickness that plague most people.

After completing chemotherapy and beat her cancer, Jess and Mark saved their money to travel to Maui for a friend’s wedding. Jess is finally able to tell her cancer how she feels about winning.
Get to know

Tommie Jo

Story by ASHLEY SEPANSKI
Photos by EMILY HORNE

Compared to her political counterparts, Tommie Jo Marsilio isn’t your typical breed of county commissioner. She’s young, 38 to be exact, and a single mom. More notably, she’s Republican, a member of the Tea Party and adores Sarah Palin. High up on her list of heroes, right next to Palin, Marsilio idolizes female butt-kickers like Batgirl and Wonder Woman. She’s energetic and sociable, like the popular girl in high school running for class president. And now, she’s Portage County’s first Republican commissioner since Janet Esposito won in 1992.
Her narrow, and surprising, defeat over her Democrat competitor, Vicki Kline, had voters on their toes. The two were within 10 votes of each other by the time 50 percent of the votes had been counted at 10 p.m. on Nov. 3. But when the final tallies came in, Marsilio emerged with a 1,368-vote victory.

Prior to the election, though, Marsilio had to overcome some campaign drama from the past. During her campaign for judge-ship in October 2009, stories in the Record Courier reported that she posted a controversal draft of a campaign flier around the county courthouse. Marsilio insists it was only given to members of her campaign, but according to the Record Courier, her then boss, Portage County Prosecutor Victor Vigluicci, disagreed, saying it was everywhere and “the talk of the town.”

Her target? Campaign opponent Kevin Poland. The flier read: “The ‘Good Old Boys’ say elect Kevin Poland.” Then toward the bottom, Marsilio “is not a member of the Ravenna ‘Good Old Boys’ corruption club.”

The corruption accusation cost Marsilio her job as assistant prosecutor — Vigluicci let her go for making illegal allegations against someone without filing formal charges.

Marsilio said the flier was never meant to be seen and is still planning to file a complaint against Vigluicci. “Kevin Poland actually yelled at me in a parking lot,” she says. “Yeah, the parking lot of the Mantua Potato Festival. I’m serious, I can’t make this stuff up.”

Marsilio says Vigluicci would have allowed her to keep her job as assistant prosecutor if she would have apologized to Poland. “That I cannot do,” she says. “And I’m still not sorry.”

Now with almost four months behind her as the new Portage County Commissioner, she’s still working to prove to doubters that she is the right choice for the job. Shaking off past scandals and working to represent a policy of openess and honesty, Marsilio is taking care of Portage County the way she can — with flair.

A NEW OFFICE

Twenty-six days after being sworn into office on Dec. 28, 2010, Marsilio sits in her canary-yellow office, sitting through a spread of papers laid out on her desk. Not much time has passed since December, but she made her first official act as commissioner to redecorate her office, at no cost, she adds, to the taxpayers. Her friends came in over New Year’s weekend to help her paint. “This used to be a hospital,” Marsilio says of her office building. “The walls used to be this ugly green with fish. I just needed to get that off and make the office happy like I am.”

Her office shelves hold several framed photos of family members and friends. In the middle is a silver frame of Marsilio shaking hands with Sarah Palin. “To meet her is to love her,” she says. “I think she’s just incredibly refreshing. People who critique her are making personal attacks instead of examining her politics. I think she’s a great woman for rising above it.”

Scattered here and there between photos, a few dolls and female action figures survey the room. She has an entire collection at home and attends doll conventions every year. Among those in her office, Super Girl and Batgirl look the most intimidating. Marsilio says powerful females inspire her, so she surrounds herself with them.

A few frames of art hang on the now-yellow walls. She says she will be holding a contest at Portage County schools to give children a chance to make art for her office.

Back to work, she bustles around the seventh floor of the Portage County Administration Building asking for papers, double checking meeting times and sharing friendly hellos. Three plaques, each featuring one of the Portage County commissioners, hang on a wall across from the elevators. Unlike some who don’t resemble their pictures, Marsilio is the spitting image of hers. The hazel eyes, dirty blonde hair, right down to the blazer she’s wearing, smile back at those she sees.

Her current agenda includes fixing a few roof leak and trash can issues, finding a new director for the Portage County water treatment plant and enduring a weekendlong 5 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. public hearing, debating whether or not to annex Hiram Township to Hiram Village. Commissioner Chris Smeiles says it’s a typical week. “We’re kind of the housekeepers of Portage County,” he says.

Also tacked onto Marsilio’s schedule is attending one of the quarterly Portage County Republican Party meetings. This meeting is on a Thursday in January at 6 p.m., a half hour after the Hiram annexation hearing breaks for the clay. She rushes over for a gathering of friends and peers and grabs a seat toward the front next to her daughter, Mattie.

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Once the meeting is underway, Marsilio is asked to give an impromptu speech about how things are going in her office. Unprepared, but at ease in front of a crowd, she delivers: “I promise you every day that I am in office, we are going to have accountability!” she finishes to applause and cheers. It’s clear that Marsilio is charismatic, but it’s the weight behind her words that makes the real difference.

ROLLING UP HER SLEEVES

Party status doesn’t typically shine through in the commissioners’ office. It’s more about diligence, hard work and good business sense. There’s a $34 million budget that needs to be dispensed fairly in Portage County, daily complaint phone calls to handle and mounds of paperwork to read.

Before Marsilio starts work at the office
though, her day officially begins at home with her 9-year-old daughter, Mattie. She is used to her mom’s crazy schedule, having been in parades for campaign races since she was a toddler, Marsilio says.

“She’s starting to ask me things like ‘Mom, what does liberal mean?’ and stuff like that, so I try to give real life examples,” Marsilio says. “Like one time I told her ‘If you work for a $5 allowance, would you then go and give it all to your best friend?’ I told her that’s how I feel about taxes.”

When Marsilio and her husband split, the pair promised to keep things as normal as possible for Mattie. Marsilio said it took a lot of time, but the two are good friends and even spent Christmas morning together with their daughter.

“It was hard,” she says. “I have Christian values. You know, I believe you get married once and you’re done. And we tried and tried, but just could not make it work.”

Now, Marsilio has worked out a routine that satisfies all three of them. With a time-consuming job and a law practice to run, Marsilio says she’s grateful she can rely on her ex.

Most mornings Marsilio drops Mattie off at school. Since she isn’t always the first to make it into work, she tends to be the last to leave.

“The other day a man called me with a complaint,” Marsilio says. “It was about 5:30 and he was just shocked that I answered the phone. He couldn’t believe I was still there and I just said ‘Yep, I’m here working late. How can I help you?’”

After the Hiram annexation hearing, Marsilio walks to the elevator to head up to her office before she leaves for another meeting. Jon Barber, the head of building security, holds the doors open for her. As the elevator ascends to the seventh floor, they discuss the hearing and busy schedules. “We tried to warn her, but you quickly learn that 24 hours is never enough,” Barber says.

“And I knew that coming in,” Marsilio laughs, “but I didn’t know how true it was until I started working here.”

Commissioner Maureen Frederick says Marsilio always had a good understanding of what needed to be taken care of in the commissioners’ office and wasted no time getting it done.

“Even back when she was the assistant prosecutor and was advising the board of commissioners on labor issues, she was always right on point. She always knew what the best course of action would be and how to execute it,” Frederick says.

When work wraps up for the day around 6:30 p.m., Marsilio heads out to wherever she needs to be, depending on the day. Some days it’s her law practice, others it’s her daughter’s Girl Scout meeting. Even her weekends are booked. Her Saturdays are filled with outside events like the Red Cross breakfast and the Ravenna Police Association reverse raffle. She finds time for it all because Marsilio says she takes to heart the idea of a “call to public service.”

When her days as a commissioner come to an end, she says she doesn’t want to rely on her law practice as a place to spend the rest of her time.

“I want to go wherever I’m needed,” Marsilio says. “You can’t be a public servant without choices. I want to be where I think I could help the most, but not because I need a job, not because I need income. Too many elected officials forget to serve the people. My mother always used to say we have two ears and one mouth and that’s not a coincidence. Politicians need to listen better and start working for people.”

Of her quest to serve, Marsilio says her main focus is on openness and transparency. During her four-year term, she hopes to change the culture of secretive politics to an open, public process.

“You know, there were so many people when I first started working here who would come into my office and say ‘Wow... I never knew what it looked like in here. I’ve never been in here,’” Marsilio says. “(Chuck Keiper was a commissioner for 17 years. How can that be? That dozens of people have never seen this office? I’m here pretty much every day until 6 or 6:30. This is a public office. Come in anytime and ask me what I’m doing and I’ll tell you.”

“Too many elected officials forget to serve the people. My mother always used to say we have two ears and one mouth and that’s not a coincidence.”

Photo courtesy of votetommiejo.com
Marsilio stands by a banner during her campaign for Portage County Commissioner.
Meet the New 20 Somethings

Story by KELLEY STOKLOSA
Cover art by JESSICA KANALAS
Photos by NIKOLAS KOLENICH
When Greg Willett walks down the steps of the M.A.C. Center this May, he does not have a job waiting for him. In fact, he has not even begun looking for one. His plan is to move home with his parents for a while.

Instead of looking forward in life, it would seem he is regressing, but psychologists like Jeffery Jensen Arnett call Willett's plan part of "emerging adulthood." Something is going on with young adults today. People in their 20s are not reaching the five stages of development psychologists have long since used to measure the transition from adolescence to adulthood — at least not like they did in previous decades. The five steps commonly accepted by American psychologists are: finishing school, leaving home, becoming financially independent, getting married and having a child. In the 1960s for example, 77 percent of women and 65 percent of men reached all five markers by the age of 30. Meaning Willett, 24, has six years to complete four out of the five stages.
Willett sits with one of his five final projects at Kent State. This piece is white, sandblasted glass being held by a metal frame, which was painted and welded by Willett.

Flash forward to 2011 and your average 20 year old looks a lot more like Willett than his 1960s counterparts. The current median age for a woman’s first marriage is 26. Most men are not willing to put a ring on it until the age of 28, according to the most recent findings by the U.S. Census Bureau. Instead of committing, 20-somethings are taking their time and exploring their options. One-third of people in their 20s move every year. For some, that means moving back in with mom and dad. Forty percent reported moving back in with their parents at some point after graduation. Two-thirds have lived with a significant other before marriage or an engagement. On average, they will hold down seven different jobs from the time they graduate from college until they turn 30.

Other Kent State students are not that different than these 20-somethings psychologists can’t wrap their brains around. Take Tim Malone, who graduated with a master’s in Spanish translation in 2010, then almost immediately set off to travel the world instead of finding a permanent job or planning a wedding. There’s also Katrina Krise, 21, who is on track to grad-

“I don’t know exactly what it means to be an adult, but I think I’m finding out a lot about who I am on this trip and that seems pretty mature to me.”
Kirse, a middle childhood education major, has known since high school that she wanted to be a teacher. She will graduate with a degree in middle childhood education in Spring 2012, but says she sees herself moving around to several states before settling down in one place.

Kirse is not the only 20-something who wants to see some of the world. Malone, who spent the last few weeks of his time at Kent State as a graduate student searching the Web for a plane ticket, decided to travel the globe instead of getting a desk job and settling down in the suburbs. Malone, 24, had spent most of his life studying and something inside him was telling him that it was now or never. So shortly after he received his master’s degree, Malone was off for the adventure he knew deep down he would never get another chance to have. Thirty years earlier, he would not have been able to put off marriage, children and a career without serious pressure from those around him.

“My parents essentially said ‘go for it,’” Malone says.

Researchers don’t seem to understand 20-somethings like Malone, Willet and Krise. Willet, who will graduate this year, took six years to earn his bachelor’s degree despite knowing he wanted major in crafts after his first semester. He does not have concrete plans after graduation, but that doesn’t bother him one bit. He says right now he is focusing on finishing up the work he still needs to do in order to graduate. “I think it’s important to not to let the pressure of wanting to perform well in school get to you, at least at the expense of your own happiness,” Willet says. After that, he will move back in with his mom and dad in Georgia and focus on finding a job once he is settled.

Krise would make any parent proud. She is paying her own way through college, in part by working at the ALDI warehouse in her hometown, Hinckley. She keeps her grades up and has been set on becoming a middle school teacher since she was in eighth grade. She is also a second degree black belt. But Krise doesn’t want to settle down after she graduates next spring and she doesn’t want to think about marriage for another 10 years. Compare this to her 20-something counter part in the 1970s, and the two groups could not look more different. The typical woman in the 1970s was married by age 21. The typical man was married at 23. These 20-somethings were settling into family life before their 25th birthdays. People seem to be growing up more slowly each decade.

Researchers have several theories regarding why this is happening. Some blame the economy for shrinking the job pool. Krise agrees. “In this economy, I am probably going to jump on any job I get after graduation. So I will probably stay as close to the school I will have a teaching job at. I would love to move around, especially with wanting to end up in North Carolina, but economically, I do not think that would be in my best interest to do. I will probably live with my parents as long as possible to save up some money to eventually put a down payment on a house,” she says. Others are certain it’s the way this generation was raised. These 20-somethings were raised by baby boomer parents who signed them up for Little League teams where everyone got a trophy just for participating. Arnott and those who support his theories are suggesting a longer period of develop-
Some of the controversy comes down to the fact that not everyone is experiencing it.

...ment needs to be added to the stages of the life cycle. Arnett, the author of "Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road From the Late Teens Through the Twenties," says generations X, Y, Z and generations to come are making permanent changes to how people will spend their 20s.

There is a lot of controversy surrounding this subject. Not everyone is willing to accept this new developmental stage. Proposing a new stage in the life cycle is a big deal in the psychological world.

"It is important to note that it is not true for everybody," says Kelly Cichy, assistant professor for Lifespan Development and Education Science. "Some of the controversy comes down to the fact that not everyone is experiencing it." Even Arnett has been forced to address this point.

Not all cultures define adolescence and adulthood the same way Americans do, and therefore are not seeing an extended development phase in their 20 year olds. Socioeconomic impact is also a factor. "Some people graduate from high school and go right into the job market because they have no other choice," Cichy says. Willet's decision to spend six years on his undergraduate degree is not feasible for everyone and...
few people could drop everything and fly around the world like Malone.

What Arnett’s emerging adulthood theory fails to take into account is that sometimes life happens despite people’s best efforts to delay it. When not everyone is experiencing this emerging adulthood developmental phase, it is difficult to declare it a real stage of life.

Six months after graduation, Malone sits in New Zealand on his day off. He says he has worked odd jobs here and there to fund his trip around the world. Malone has paid for his trip on his own, something he is rather proud of. If someone were keeping score, they would have to mention that Malone has reached three out of the five milestones defined by psychologists. He is well-educated, left home in Springfield, Ill. several years ago and has been able to fund a trip to the other side of the world without asking his mother or his father to open their pockets. Malone’s Facebook wall is full of his peers explaining how envious they are of him and wanting to know how it is in parts of the world they may never have the chance to see. And although his parents are not funding his trip, Malone knows they are standing behind him just in case.

“If my parents hadn’t been so supportive, I would like to think I’d have still gone on this trip,” he says. “But, I don’t know if everything would have gone as easy as it has.”

Krise says her parents have always been supportive, but made sure she made her own way in life. “I want them to know that I’m independent, self-sufficient and it’s because of you guys that I’m where I am today,” Krise says of her parents.

Some experts theorize that supportive parents like Malone’s have a lot to do with emerging adulthood. Parents today are more understanding than in previous generations. They embrace that their children need more time for exploration and want their children to have the things they didn’t. Cichy says.

Willett doesn’t feel pressure from his parents to graduate and find a job. He says they have no problem with him moving back in with them. He says most of the pressure he feels comes from within, but he likes to remember to take time to enjoy himself. “Some people seem to forget that there needs to be more to life than school and work. You can’t lose sight of that.” Parents aren’t the only ones who might be making it easier to delay independence.

Certain social buffers are also in place to help young adults ease into adulthood. People can’t vote until they are 18, they aren’t allowed to rent a car until 25 and in some states they can remain in foster care until 21. The new health care laws also enable children to piggyback on their parents’ insurances until they are 26.

These safeguards raise the old question, “What came first: the chicken or the egg?”

“I think part of it is also that women are going to school a lot more these days and don’t have to rely on men, which I like.”
Are these social programs making it too easy for 20-somethings to delay adulthood, or is this just what people these days need? "It may be making it easier or it may be a reflection of the fact that young people need that more today," Cichy says.

Some people choose to never marry or have children. This is nothing new, but the number of people who decide never to get married has been on a steady decline every decade since 1950. Women make up about 63 percent of the workforce and are either the primary or co-bread winner for their families. Divorce rates are still high. Women can safely get pregnant into their 40s and single parenthood is rarely met with horrified gasps these days. People simply have more choices than they did previously, Cichy says.

"I think part of it is also that women are going to school a lot more these days and don’t have to rely on men, which I like," Krise says.

Willet wonders what all the fuss is about when he is perfectly happy with the way his life is going. He feels he became an adult when he turned 18, because he has been making his own decisions since that time. He says he doesn’t see a need to try and live up to what people in previous decades have done.

Malone doesn’t think five milestones should define him either. He becomes visibly annoyed when it is suggested that he is not an adult or somehow not contributing to society. "I don’t know exactly what it means to be an adult, but I think I’m finding out a lot about who I am on this trip and that seems pretty mature to me," he says.

Emerging adulthood suggests that 20-somethings now need more time to be something between a child and an adult. But, the definition of what it means to be an adult cannot be defined by statistics alone. Malone, Willet and Krise are adults in a time when adults simply have more choice. So, it is no wonder that what each of them defines adulthood is so varied.

"Don’t be so down on us. Obviously, even around campus...something is going right if everyone is going to college and doing something with their life," Krise says.
The retired jersey of Rosalind Ross at center court at Bradley Technical School in Milwaukee, Wis.

IN AN INSTANT

HOW FORMER KENT STATE BASKETBALL STAR MALIKA WILLOUGHBY LOST EVERYTHING

Story by JOEY POMPIGNANO
Photos by EDDIE OLSCHANSKY

In the surveillance tape, two women in a black BMW pull up to a Popeyes restaurant in Milwaukee around 10 p.m. on September 15, 2010. They begin arguing, which escalates to pushing and slapping each other. More pushing and slapping. This continues for a few minutes before the passenger grabs a Beretta .380, gets out of the vehicle and walks around the back of the car to the driver's side. She points the semi-automatic handgun at the driver and fires at her face. The shooter drags the woman out of the car onto the pavement, walks away, then walks back and kneels on the ground beside her in a please-wake-up panic. But it was too late — for both women.

Rosalind Ross, 30, was pronounced dead at the scene. And with the police station just a few blocks away, it didn't take long for law enforcement to arrest 27-year-old Malika Willoughby on one charge of first-degree intentional homicide.

Malika was one of the greatest basketball players to ever play for Kent State. Rosalind was a former WNBA player. Both were well known in their hometown of Milwaukee. They were also lovers for 14 years. Their promising futures ended abruptly, leaving a community wondering why this happened.
Rosalind was 16 when she met 13-year-old Malika through playing AAU summer basketball. Both went on to have successful, even legendary, high school and college basketball careers.

Malika lettered in basketball all four years at Milwaukee's Washington High School. Her All-City Conference and All-State selection earned her an athletic scholarship to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The 5'8" point guard transferred to Kent State University in 2003.

As a sophomore at Kent State, Malika's 194 assists ranked ninth in the nation (second all-time at KSU). She ranked 19th in the nation in steals her senior year with the Flashes. Her 2.9 steals per game average led her becoming the 2006 MAC Defensive Player of the Year, as well as Kent State's female athlete of the year at the 30th Annual Black United Students Ebony Achievement Awards.

It was Rosalind, though, who furthered a career in basketball at the professional level.

After graduating from Milwaukee Technical and Trade High School in 1998, Rosalind attended Northeastern Oklahoma A&M for a year before transferring to the University of Oklahoma. The 5'9" guard helped lead the Sooners to the Final Four of the NCAA women's tournament. They made it to the 2002 championship game, losing to the UCONN Huskies 82-70.

The WNBA's Los Angeles Sparks drafted Rosalind in the first round with the 16th overall pick, knowing that she might not be healthy enough to play because of lingering knee injuries that stemmed from her days at Milwaukee Tech.

Bradley Technical High School, which replaced Milwaukee Tech, has a brand new gym that Rosalind never had a chance to play on because the school was not yet built during her high school tenure. The old gym at Milwaukee Tech, her brother Spencer, 28, says, "duney" and "deteriorating." When Rosalind spoke about Bradley Tech's gym, "She would say, 'If I had this gym, I wouldn't have bad knees right now,'" Spencer says.

When Rosalind's injuries were finished healing, she and Nikki Teasley were supposed to be the most dominant backcourt duo in the WNBA.

The Sparks were a winning team, but Rosalind never healed. Her professional career ended after a year and a half because of her chronic knee problems.
TEENAGE LOVE

Growing up as a lesbian in the '90s was difficult for both girls since homosexuality was not as accepted in society as it is today. But despite that, their teenage love continued into their 20s.

Pamela Collins, Rosalind's mother, supported her daughter's sexual orientation because she taught her children to be comfortable with themselves as individuals. Willie Collins, Rosalind's father, did not approve of his daughter's homosexuality at first, and his unwillingness to accept her being a lesbian brought tension to the household. Willie recalls a scene outside his family's home on 21st and Center Street:

"I look out the window and I see my son jumping rope, and my daughter playing basketball," Willie says. "I said, 'What is going on here?'"

After Rosalind told her parents she was a lesbian, Spencer got the courage to admit that he was also gay. Willie thought Spencer's announcement was influenced by Rosalind. With both Rosalind and Spencer being openly gay, Spencer says he and his sister would joke with their brother Kenneth Collins, 19, about being the "last hope" for their mother to have grandchildren.

Willie and Pamela say they believed that similar issues were being dealt with in the Harp household (Malika's parents). Pamela says that she and Malika's mother, Rebecca Harp, spoke as little as possible in the 14 years their daughters were in an on-off-again relationship with each other. Rebecca Harp did not wish to comment for this story.

What made the death of Rosalind even more tragic for Spencer was that he also considered Malika a friend. In fact, the three of them were a close-knit trio. He and Rosalind once drove to Kent State to watch Malika play a basketball game, and he traveled with Malika to see Rosalind play for the University of Oklahoma. Spencer says he remembers conversations regarding his sister's relationship with Malika between Malika and her mother. "(Malika) would say, 'I'm not gay, I just love Rosalind,'" Spencer says.

again off-again relationship with each other. Rebecca Harp did not wish to comment for this story.

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REMEMBERING ROSALIND

January 17, Rosalind would have been 31 years old. The family went to her gravesite to sing "Happy Birthday" and release helium balloons. Spencer made a miniature snowman next to her stone, and cried with relatives and friends. He says he often stresses over different scenarios that may have prevented the incident.

"I talked with her on the phone about an hour prior to her death," Spencer says. "She called me up and asked if I wanted any chicken because she and Malika were going to stop and get some food." He says he regrets not meeting up with her that night, or not talking on the phone with her a while longer.

Spencer shared a special bond with his sister. They would quote Angela Bassett lines from their favorite film, "What's Love Got to Do with It," and fake-smack each other in a playful manner. He went to all of his sister's basketball games, and has her scoring and rebound statistics memorized. Rosalind taught him how to be ambidextrous after he broke his right wrist. She would miss her own recreation-league games and go watch his basketball games, to see if his left-hand shooting improved.

Rosalind had plans for her brother: "Roz would call me up and ask for tips about teams they were getting ready to play," Spencer says. "She'd say, 'We've got Texas Tech coming up. What are they like?'" Then he'd go study tape and give her the run-down of opponents' half-court offenses and defensive sets. "I didn't realize it at the time, but she was preparing me to become a coach," he says. Though Spencer says he didn't have any credentials to be a

Rosalind's brothers Spencer (left) and Kenneth (right) revisit the court near their childhood home in Milwaukee where the siblings played together as children.
coach, Rosalind trained him to be ready when he got called on to do so. He became an assistant coach at Tech High School, and then the freshman team’s head coach.

After graduating from Kent State with a marketing degree in 2006, Malika got hired as a bank manager in Milwaukee. She bought a home for her and Rosalind to live in together.

But financial support was not enough to keep their relationship going.

According to Spencer, Rosalind was seeing two other women. The Collins family says Malika offered to birth a child for Rosalind, and asked Spencer to be the donor. But the Collins family says that although Rosalind loved children, she didn’t want any.

“My sister should have stopped using Malika for her money, and Malika should have left the relationship knowing that Rosalind was openly unfaithful,” Spencer says.

During a basketball game Rosalind was refereeing, an angry fan spit on Rosalind over a call he disagreed with. After that confrontation, Malik bought a gun for Rosalind’s safety. Spencer did not like the idea of Malika purchasing a gun for Rosalind. “I said, ‘(Guns) don’t harm the people they’re supposed to harm, or do what they’re supposed to do,’” Spencer says.

The same gun Malika bought with the purpose of protecting Rosalind was the same gun that was used to kill Rosalind.
When Malika was first held in police custody, she pleaded not guilty to first-degree intentional homicide because she said she thought she took the magazine out of the gun upon pulling the trigger, according to court documents. The state of Wisconsin does not impose the death penalty. If Malika is found guilty of first-degree intentional homicide, the maximum sentence is life in prison.

In the courtroom Defense Attorney Michael Hart told Judge Dennis Cimpl that the defense team hired a ballistics expert to examine the gun. Cimpl granted a postponement and rescheduled the pre-trial hearing to March 11. The hearing was rescheduled for April 5, with the jury trial set for April 25. Hart did not respond to phone calls seeking comment. The defense will probably argue that the gun went off accidentally due to a hair trigger, Prosecutor Mark Williams says. He says “the jury is going to get a number of charges that they can find Willoughby guilty of, and the defense will probably argue for one of the lesser charges.” He says that if that charge gets lessened to reckless homicide, the sentence is up to 60 years.

There’s a good chance the defense will ask Huddleston to testify in this case. Her phone call is the root of what the defense will argue caused Malika to react “reckless.” “The relationship was a triangle that became a trust issue with three of us and Rosalind in the middle,” Huddleston says.

But Huddleston says Rosalind was excited about starting a “new” and “fresh” beginning. And Belinda says she was looking forward to sharing that new life with her.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

Framed family portraits and pictures of Rosalind in a number 53 Snoopers jersey decorate the living room walls of Pamela’s home. Starting at the photos, Pamela looks like she’s waiting to hear Rosalind let out one of her “ugly” and “squeaky” laughs she misses so much. She shows pride in her daughter’s awards, displaying a glass case with trophies and plaques. Posthumous tribute items from charity fundraiser events symbolize the community’s outreach to raise money for Rosalind’s funeral service and other expenses.

It has been several months since Rosalind’s death, but the broken sleep patterns persist for the 50 year old. She describes her intuition she had just days prior to her daughter’s death.

“I said, ‘Rosalind, you can come home. If something isn’t right, you can come home,’” Pamela says. “I went to sleep and saw her as clear as day in my dream in a casket with the outfit she was buried in.”

Pamela says Rosalind was leaving Milwaukee to work as a recruiting scout at her alma mater, University of Oklahoma but that she had no intentions of bringing Malika along with her. Fourteen years of dating on and off made it difficult for either of them to walk away from the relationship.

While Pamela turned to her Apostolic faith when seeking answers through prayer from God, her husband Willie, 52, handled his emotions in a different way.

“I cursed,” Willie says, “I drank and I cursed, and I drank some more.” He can’t find it in his heart to ever forgive Malika, and says she deserves the maximum penalty for her actions. “We have a life sentence, too, because we’ll never see our daughter again,” he says. “She killed my baby girl. Malika killed my baby girl.” Malika’s fate is yet to be determined by a judge and a jury of her peers. Depending on whether homicide charges against her are intentional or reckless will unveil how much time she will serve if found guilty.

Rosalind will never get to recruit student athletes to the University of Oklahoma. She won’t get to see Spencer coach another basketball game. If Kenneth has children, they will never know their Aunt Rosalind. Pamela and Willie lost their daughter.

Basketball lost two icons.
Energetically waving her sign outside of Little Caesars, Liz Behan has become a staple of the pizza shop on East Main Street. As long as the temperature is above freezing, Behan can be found standing outside Little Caesars in her L.L. Bean jacket, diligently waving her pizza-shaped sign.

Every day, cars pass by and drivers turn to look her way. Some days they beep, other times they stop by and offer to bring her coffee — she politely declines but thanks them; she’s not a coffee drinker.

It seems nothing can stop Behan, who braves a multitude of weather conditions all for the sake of promoting Little Caesars, where she has worked since October 2008, when the pizza shop first opened its Kent location.

Behan stands outside Little Caesars anywhere from 10 to 20 hours a week. She says the job helps her put a little extra money in her pocket or pay an unexpected bill at home, where she lives with her husband and two children.

She started off making pizzas and working the registers, but when gasoline prices spiked to more than $4 shortly after Little Caesar’s opening, the shop lost business and had to find new ways to attract customers.

Behan and storeowner Mike Tillia started to cook up new ways to promote the restaurant, and Behan volunteered to take up shakerboarding, a job she continues to this day.

Behan is the definition of shakerboarding: braving the weather to enthusiastically display signs promoting Little Caesars’ current deals or specials. Maybe even dancing a little.

“People really do tell us, ‘I was just driving by, and I saw the girl out front. If I didn’t see her, I wouldn’t have come in,’” Tillia says. “It really works.”

Tillia says that generally if it is below freezing, Behan won’t go outside, but it is often difficult to convince her it’s too cold.

“We had a few people who thought we were making her go out there to do this, and I would tell them to go out and talk to her — see if you can get her in,” Tillia says. “Behan is a trooper. She loves it, and she loves to be out there meeting people.”

Behan, a native of Hermitage, Pa. and an avid Browns fan, seems to feel uncomfortable with this recognition and quickly says she doesn’t mind the cold weather.

“If you dress warmly, it’s not bad,” she says.

Tillia says sometimes he has to force Behan to come inside when it’s too cold.

“I had a guy actually come in and give me a really hard time about it,” he says. “I went out and got her. I said ‘You’d better come in,’ and I had to fight her to do it.”

Although she doesn’t mind fighting off the cold, Behan admits sometimes she has to fend off young men who ask for her number.

“We had this one gentleman — I think he told me he was 28 — and I told him, I’m at work. If you want to talk later to talk about anything when I’m not doing something, when I don’t have to get home — fine,” Behan says, clearly used to similar propositions. “I said, ‘You’re 28, I’m old enough to be your mother.’”

Behan says that on days she’s not shakerboarding, she’s promoting Little Caesar’s at the university and other local businesses.

“She’s the perfect ambassador for our company,” Tillia says. “She’s always asking me for flyers or my business cards to hand out. She’s constantly promoting our business.”

In her free time, Behan says she does a lot of volunteer work for Family & Community Services, a non-profit social service organization. It’s clear she expects no praise for her work; this is something she does for her own enjoyment.

“We serve dinners down on South Water Street, and at Christmas we help distribute toys, things like that,” Behan says.

Although she earned her associate degree in communication from Youngstown State University, Behan says she continues to take courses at Kent State when she can.

“I just audit classes for my enjoyment,” she says. “I took a religious class, some psych classes. I just take a class at Kent whenever, just for something to do.”

Behan says the best part of her job is simply meeting and talking with new people, especially Kent State students.

“A lot of the college kids come up and just like, you know, ask me a question about something in their life,” Behan says. “I guess I’m kind of like the mom figure out there — like a sounding board. I think just sometimes people have something going on, and they just want somebody to talk to.”

Once Behan is out of earshot, Tillia confides that he can’t think of a more humble person.

“She’s not the one to look for accolades,” he says. “That lady never has a negative word about anything. I wish everyone could be like her, and you know, she hasn’t had an easy life. Her family has lived paycheck to paycheck, like many of us do, and you never hear a bad word.

She’s very upbeat, very positive — just the way we all should be.”
Pass the hors d'oeuvres.

Escaping ignorant-American stereotypes.
Visiting family in Taiwan last year, Tiffany Hu went to find a public restroom but found culture shock instead. Hu says the toilets look like holes in the ground with cords hanging down from the ceiling. Shocked and confused, she confided in her aunt for instructions. But her aunt’s uncontrollable laughter cracked up other locals in the restroom, and Hu quickly became embarrassed.

While the Kent State senior fashion design major gracefully recovered from her culture shock and is currently studying at Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Institute of Textiles and Clothing, she is not the first student to struggle in a foreign country.

"Trying to tell someone something before they're in the environment where they'll use it -- it's like having a class on how to ride a bicycle," says Mary Anne Saunders, executive director of the Office of International Affairs at Kent State. "You just have to do it."

But if students spend more time buying cute travel clothes than researching their future destinations, they can come off as ignorant Americans who only care about their own culture. When Sarah Bolinger spent spring 2009 in Germany, the senior Kent State German translation major said the people she met were impressed she spoke the native language well. "(They expect) the 'ugly American' -- someone who expects others to bend their culture, language and habits," Bolinger says. "When (they) realized I made an effort to fit into their German culture, even though I frequently made mistakes, (they) were ecstatic."

To avoid those mistakes, here's a guide with just enough information to dull the culture shock students may encounter on arrival in Italy, Germany, France, China or Japan.

MIND YOUR MANNER(ISM)S

Even with rusty foreign-language skills, students should be able to fit in through the body language or non-verbal cues. For Adriana Di Biase, who is working on a Ph.D. in translation and teaching an Italian class at Kent State, the biggest difference between Italians and Americans is their "personal bubbles." Italians get much closer to people, she says.

Professor Rosa Commissio, who teaches Italian at Kent State, says Italians are best known for talking with their hands and using over-the-top hand gestures. For example, pulling your hair signifies anger or frustration, and biting your own hand means, "You're going to get it!"

If the French do not like something, they will move one hand back and forth quickly as if they are petting an imaginary cat near their chests. Although Americans treat everyone like dear friends, Professor Matthew Kemp, who teaches French at Kent State, says it takes the French some time before that closeness is achieved, contributing to the stereotype of formal French people being "cold."

Similarly, many view Germans as individualistic people who greatly value their privacy. Bolinger says she was shocked at how much independence her host brothers had and how little time the family spent in the same room. "The houses are much less open and each room has a door, so it was a bit lonely for me at first," Bolinger says. But there is some logic behind that. Since heating is so expensive in Germany, houses do not have central heating systems but a radiator in each room.

Professor Erik Angelone, who teaches German at Kent State, says Germans use friendly greetings but are not close to many people. Germany is known as a low context culture, which means it does not cater to an "in-group" and nothing is left unsaid. Although most communication comes from actual written or spoken words, Germans use hand gestures. Crossing your thumbs means "good luck," and pointing a finger to your head is a severe insult.

Finger pointing is also disrespectful in China. To get someone's attention, you should turn your palm face down and scratch the air. Americans visiting China should avoid touching strangers and showing the soles of their feet. They also should not be offended if nobody says, "Bless you," after a sneeze.

In Japan, people remove their shoes when entering a building, so Professor Judy Wakabayashi, who teaches Japanese at Kent State, says to avoid wearing holey socks. If they are looking at people's feet, it's because they're not looking in their eyes. Japanese people make less eye contact than Americans, and the Chinese hardly make any eye contact at all. In Europe, it is polite to maintain eye contact.
tions can help them know exactly where they are. “Take the time to say, “Itte kimasu” (I’m off now.) and ‘Tadaima’ (I’m back.),” Wakabayashi says.

While no amount of preparation before students say “Itte kimasu” to their foreign destinations can help them know exactly what they will encounter, they just need to rely on one piece of advice: “When you go abroad, you have to flip the switch,” Saunders says. “You sort of relax a little bit, make mental notes as you go along, don’t get ruffled and roll with it.”

Even after a professor in France scolded her for drinking hot chocolate in the hall before a quiz, Blakeley learned how to “roll with it” and left her semester abroad with positive memories. “Cultural barriers do indeed exist,” she says, “but kindness and sincerity are always the first and most important steps to overcoming these differences. B
what?

Getting ready to travel? Get familiar with some key phrases.

Here are some common phrases students should be familiar with when visiting Italy, France, Germany, China or Japan:

**HELLO**
- Italian: Ciao [chow]
- French: Bonjour [bonzhoo]
- German: Guten Tag [gooot-ten tok]
- Chinese: Ni hao [nee-ho]
- Japanese: Konnichiwa [koh-nee-chee-wah]

**GOOD-BYE**
- Italian: Arrivederci [ah-ree-vahr-deh-chee]
- French: Au revoir [oh-rhee-vor]
- German: Auf Wiedersehen [oh-f wее-deh-seh-nehn]
- Chinese: Zai jian [zi jee-an]
- Japanese: Bai bai [byeh byeh]

**PLEASE**
- Italian: Per favore [per-fah-voh-ray]
- French: S'il vous plaît [see-voo-play]
- German: Bitte [byehtah]
- Chinese: Qing [ching]
- Japanese: Onegai shimasu [ohn-ay-guy shem-sah]

**THANK YOU**
- Italian: Grazie [grat-zee-ay]
- French: Merci [mah-ree]
- German: Danke [duhn-kuh]
- Chinese: Xie xie [shay shay]
- Japanese: Arigatoh [ah-ree-gah-toh]

**CAN YOU HELP ME?**
- Italian: Mi potrebbe aiutare? [me pour ow-you-tah-day]
- French: Pouviez-vous m'aider, si'il vous plaît? [poo-vay-doo-may-day, see-voo-play]
- German: Können Sie mir helfen? [kinn-in zee meer help-hen]
- Chinese: Ni keyi bang zhu wo ma? [nee koyee bang joo wow ma]
- Japanese: Anata wa watashi o tasukeru koto ga dekiru [ahn-nah-tah wah wah-ta-shi ah tasu-ka-re-ooh coht-ro gah deek-keer-oo]

**HOW MUCH DOES THIS COST?**
- Italian: Quanto costa? [kwahn-toh koh-stah]
- French: Ça coûte combien, s'il vous plaît? [kah coot-toh koh-b-teen, see-voo-play]
- German: Wieviel kostet das? [vee-feel koh-stet dahs]
- Chinese: Zhe ge dong xi duo shao qian? [joe-chyeh dome seeh doh shaw chyan]
- Japanese: Ikura desu ka? [ee-koorah des-kah]

**DO YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?**
- Italian: Parli inglese? [par-lay ing-layzay]
- French: Parlez-vous Anglais? [par-lay-voo-ong-lay]
- German: Sprechen Sie Englisch? [shpreck-in zee ing-laysh]
- Chinese: Ni hui shuo ying yu ma? [nee show ying you ma]
- Japanese: Anata wa eigo o hanashimasu ka? [ahn-nah-tah wah eeg-o wah-nah-shimah-su ka]

**WHERE’S THE BATHROOM?**
- Italian: Dove è la toilette? [doh-vay la toh-leh-teh]
- French: Où se trouve les toilettes, s'il vous plaît? [oo-seh truhv leh toh-leh-teh]
- German: Wo ist hier die Toilette? [vo eiht hyyr dhe toh-leh-teh]
- Chinese: Ce suc zai na li? [tsu uh soh tye naat lee]

**WHERE’S THE SUBWAY?**
- Italian: Dove è la metropolitana? [doh-vay lay meh-troh-poh-leh-tah-nah]
- French: Où est le métro, s'il vous plaît? [oo-ehs leh meh-toh, see-voo-play]
- German: Wo geht es hier zur U-Bahn? [vo get es hyyr zur oo-bahn]
- Chinese: Di xia tie zai no ma? [dye sah tee zaih no ma]
- Japanese: Koko wa nanidesu ka? [koh-koh day chee-ket-sue wah naah-neeh-des]

**DO YOU WANT TO HANG OUT?**
- Italian: Vuoi passare un po' di tempo con me? [vooy pah-sah-reh ooh-poh-deh con me]

**IS THERE ANYTHING FUN TO DO TONIGHT?**
- Italian: C’è qualcosa di bello da fare stasera? [che kwah-lah-sa doh beh-loh dah fahr staa-sah-ray]
- French: Qu’est-ce qu’on va faire ce soir? [kayt-seh koohn vahn vah fahr seh-soh]
- German: Ist heute Abend irgendwo was los? [ees hyytuh ah-bend kahn-dzoh-voh wah loh]
- Chinese: Ji tian wan shang shen me ke waner de? [jyeh tyan wahn shang seh-meh kway-wah deh]
- Japanese: Nani ka tanoshimi wa kon’ya o okonau ni wa arimasu ka? [nah-nah kah too-naah-shimee wah kon-ya o oh-ko-nah u ni wah ar-i-mah su ka]

**FRENCH**
- French: Tu veux te détendre avec moi? [to voo tay deh-ton-dray aveh mew]
- German: Wollen wir was zusammen unternehmen? [vollen weer vah sooz-sah-men oo-ter-neh-men]
- Chinese: Ni xiang chu men ma? [nee shyan choo mahn ma]

**HELS**
- French: Ou est-ce qu’on va faire ce soir? [ooh esh koo fay kah seh-soh]
- Chinese: Di xia tie zai no ma? [dye sah tee zaih no ma]
- Japanese: Koko wa nanidesu ka? [koh-koh day chee-ket-sue wah naah-neeh-des]

**THANKS**
- Italian: Grazie [grat-zee-ay]
- French: Merci [mah-ree]
- German: Danke [duhn-kuh]
- Chinese: Xie xie [shay shay]
- Japanese: Arigatoh [ah-ree-gah-toh]

Translations are from the following Kent State faculty and staff:
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- German: Assistant Professor Erik Angelone
- Chinese: Instructor May Ling
- Japanese: Professor Judy Wakabayashi
Story by DIONI GOMEZ
Screen Shot from us.battle.net/wow

I'm a level 8.5 Night Elf Druid from the Kingdom of Darnassus and proud of it. In layman's terms, I play World of Warcraft. But let's be honest, who doesn't? With more than 12 million subscribers worldwide, chances are a family member, friend, co-worker, boyfriend or girlfriend has joined the Warcraft sensation and taken on his or her own online persona.

From its humble beginnings as an unassuming, real-time strategy game to the massive multiplayer online role-playing experience it is today, Warcraft has "leveled up" past all of our expectations and battled its way into mainstream media. But, whether you're an epic-g geared veteran or just a lowly newb, few know Warcraft's complete timeline. So if you're a certified member of The Horde or Alliance looking to trace your family tree, or if you've never heard of Warcraft before and are trying to figure out what your boyfriend means when he cancels a date because he is "raiding tonight," here's a little history lesson. Let the battle for Azeroth begin.

WARCRAFT: ORCS AND HUMANS

THE FIRST WAR
November, 1994
Genre: RTS
Players: 1-2

The classic rivalry that started it all, Warcraft: Orcs and Humans introduced us not only to the Warcraft universe, but for many, it introduced us to the real-time strategy genre of games. Players could play as either humans or orcs and battled to gain resources, raise armies and earn dominance — themes still prevalent in Warcraft games today. Pixilated pleasure in its purest form.

WARCRAFT II: TIDES OF DARKNESS

THE SECOND WAR
December, 1995
Genre: RTS
Players: 1-8

The battle raged on in Warcraft II as new units joined the ranks of both the Horde and Alliance including elves, trolls, dwarves and dragons, all the staples of classic fantasy. But the real allure of Warcraft II was that you could now team up and play cooperatively with up to seven friends through a LAN connection or play competitively against gamers across the globe through the game's battle.net feature.

GAMER'S DICTIONARY

NEWB: A derogatory statement used to describe a player who is not good at the game, regardless of their time spent playing.

RTS: Real-Time Strategy, a genre of games where the player controls all aspects of a strategic battle scenario, including troop movements and resource gathering.

MMORPG: Acronym for massively multiplayer online role-playing game, a genre of games where the player creates a character avatar and interacts with other players through an online world.

EPIC GEARED: Possessing extremely powerful weapons and armor, a reflection of your ability.

LAN: An acronym for local area network, a connection that connects a small area of computers together such as in a home or office.

LEVELING: The process of gaining experience through completing quests and killing enemies to advance in power and level.

THE BURNING LEGION: A faction of demons from another world that players from both the Horde and Alliance can fight.

OUTLAND: The homeland of the Orcs and a separate world to Azeroth.

NORTHREND: The northern continent of Azeroth and kingdom of the Lich King.


WOW: Acronym for World of Warcraft.


**WARCRAFT II: BEYOND THE DARK PORTAL**

April, 1996
Genre: RTS
Players: 1-8

Expansion pack to Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness. As the second war continues, the story progresses through the dark portal and the menacing homeland of the orcs.

**WARCRAFT ENCYCLOPEDIA**

**WARCRAFT RACES:** Races in Warcraft are the varied humanoids of Azeroth defined by their characteristics. Today players can choose to play from a wide variety of races including: Humans, Orcs, Dwarves, Trolls, Night Elves, Tauren, Gnomes, Undead, Draenei, Blood Elves, Worgen and Goblins.

**WARCRAFT CLASSES:** Classes in Warcraft define a player's role in the game and dictate what abilities he or she will possess. Classes in WOW include: Warrior, Paladin, Hunter, Rogue, Mage, Druid, Shaman, Death Knight, Priest and Warlock. Not all classes are available in every game.

**ALLIANCE:** A faction of Warcraft races working cooperatively to achieve similar goals. The Alliance is the enemy of the Horde. Races available to the Alliance are: Humans, Dwarves, Night Elves, Gnomes, Draenei and Worgen.

**HORDE:** A faction of Warcraft races working cooperatively to achieve similar goals. The Horde is the enemy of the Alliance. Races available to the Horde are: Orcs, Trolls, Tauren, Undead, Blood Elves and Goblins.

**AZEROOTH:** The world where Warcraft is set.

**RAIDING:** Grouped players in WOW who work together to defeat the enemies and scenarios in a dungeon to gain powerful weapons and armor.

**THE DARK PORTAL:** The portal that connects Azeroth to the Orcs homeland of Outland.

**BEER DRINKING PANDA:** Regarding a Warcraft III: The Frozen Throne hero unit. Players could choose to play as a drunken panda that dispenses beer.

**WARCRAFT III: REIGN OF CHAOS**

July, 2002
Genre: RTS
Players: 1-12

Six years was well worth the wait for Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos. It was still the same RTS war machine we had grown to love, but with a shiny new paint job that included new graphics, missions, units and two new races to join the battle for Azeroth: the secretive Night Elves and the plagued Undead. But most importantly, Warcraft III laid the foundation for the World of Warcraft by beginning a tale told through the eyes of new “Hero” characters, a story that has not been completed to this day.

**WORLD OF WARCRAFT**

November, 2004
Genre: MMORPG
Players: Literally, the world

They call it WOW for a reason. The game that revolutionized the MMORPG genre and has since gone on to create its own universe, inside and outside the game. As players were allowed to create their own characters and descend into a virtual world, the possibilities became endless as the game itself. Players could choose among eight races and nine classes to complete quests across an interactive world by leveling, socializing and fighting their way to the top. Say goodbye to the outside world.

**WORLD OF WARCRAFT: THE BURNING CRUSADE**

January, 2007
Adventurers travel through the dark portal once more to face the demonic Burning Legion. Players could now quest to level 70 and choose from two new races: Draenei for the Alliance and Blood Elves for the Horde.

**WORLD OF WARCRAFT: WRATH OF THE LICH KING**

November, 2008
With the demons of Outland vanquished, players return to their homeland only to discover the Lich King squatting in his kingdom of Northrend, threatening to conquer the world with his undead army. Players could now explore the frozen north in their journey to level 80 and rise as a new, chilling hero class: the Death Knight.

**WORLD OF WARCRAFT: CATACLYSM**

December, 2010
This most recent expansion pack has gone vintage and takes players back to the lands of the original World of Warcraft to face a new baddie, Deathwing the dragon. Players can quest to level 85 and enjoy two new races: the cursed Worgen (basically wolf men) and the ingenuous Goblins.

**WARCRAFT: THE MOVIE?**

Genre: Motion Picture
Players: None so far, but maybe you and a date?

Most of the information about the Warcraft movie has been gathered from Comic-Con interviews and small releases from Warcraft's parent company, Blizzard Entertainment. What we do know is that the release has been delayed multiple times but is currently listed as in development and set for the year 2013. Legendary Pictures is the production company, and director Sam Raimi is set to direct the live action film. According to the website wowpedia.org, fans can expect a ton of action and violence. As writer Chris Metzen has said of the film, "We're definitely not going to make a G or a PG version of this. It's not PillowfightCraft."
WAYS TO CLEAN UP YOUR GAME

Story by LYDIA COUTRE
Illustration by ALEXANDRA HUSTON

BEER PONG: known to college students as their great American pastime. To doctors, it’s a one-way ticket to germs and disease. Beer pong and germs are two dots you’ve probably connected before, but Christopher Woolverton, professor of environmental health sciences at Kent State, showed us all the nitty-gritty details we’ve been ignoring every time we sink a shot.

When three or four people are sick at a party with cold symptoms, “that’s not enough to stop them from coming to play,” Woolverton says. “And typically you’re not going to refuse someone from playing I would imagine.”

There are plenty of ways to lower the health hazards from beer pong. It’s just a matter of understanding the risks and putting techniques into place to avoid them.

1. Woolverton says the minimal percent of alcohol in beer is “not going to be killing any of the microorganisms.”

People tend to think the alcohol will kill any germs in their pong cups, but the alcohol content isn’t nearly enough to sanitize anything.

“If you look at the ingredient list on the most common hand sanitizer, which would be Purell, it has 62 percent alcohol in it — for a reason. You need that much to kill the germs,” Woolverton says.

2. During the game, as the ping pong ball is handled, dropped, tossed, rolled and splashed, it comes into contact with numerous surfaces that may transfer microorganisms onto it. Regardless of how long it has been on the ground, the ball has a chance of picking up microorganisms.

“You’re talking about a little plastic ball, and plastic inherently has a net charge to it, and so things stick to it,” Woolverton says.
Not only is the alcohol unable to kill the germs, but it also has the potential to increase the amount of microorganisms in your cup. If you’re playing a long game of pong or the beer has been sitting out for a while, Woolverton says “…stuff in the air plus stuff that gets put in it on the ping pong ball could grow using the beer as food.”
Translation: You could be drinking mold and bacteria.

The results of consuming mold vary depending on the species, and most people come into contact with mold every once in a while without any effect. “But getting a really big gulp of it — or worse, the spores from the mold get aerosolized and we inhale them,” Woolverton says, “then they get in our lungs.”

The good news is, people with a competent immune system are “probably not going to get very sick.” But, not everyone has a healthy immune system. If you’re one of those people, you could be putting yourself at risk. Just because the ball falls to the floor doesn’t mean it will pick something up, but “You can never tell,” Woolverton says. “That’s the point.”

There are different ways to keep aspects of your drinking games, specifically rinse cups, sanitary, such as adding drops of iodine to water or mixing an eyedropper full of household bleach to a gallon of water and using either for the rinse cup.

It’ll destroy the microorganisms, but if you’re a fan of reusing cups, “it won’t do anything about the grit,” Woolverton says.

Using water in cups instead of actual beer where the ball bounces is also a way to greatly reduce the health risks. In fact, you should probably start playing pong this way if you don’t already.

There are three ways germs can be transmitted.
1. **Airborne** – When germs or microorganisms are in the air.
2. **Intermediary** – When germs are passed through something else.
   a. **Vector** – living intermediary such as a mosquito, flea or tick
   b. **Vehicle** – nonliving intermediary (usually food or water)
3. **Direct Contact** – when mucus secretions are literally captured by someone else.

According to environmental health sciences professor Christopher Woolverton, the rinse cup is not as effective as people may think. In all honesty, it’s probably not rinsing anything.

“How long has that water been sitting around, and how many times has a ping pong ball been rinsed in that?” Woolverton says.

There is also the concern of how clean the cups are to begin with. If you or your beer pong host simply runs water over the cups before a game, “Are they rinsed with a detergent? Are they rinsed with a bleach?” Woolverton says. “If they’re simply rinsed with water and not very well, but just enough to get the residual beer smell out, you probably have a little greater risk than if it was a fresh cup coming out of the package.”
WANT MORE?

Check out a photo story inspired by the book, “This I Believe,” barefoot running footage, professors weighing in on 2012, blogs, multimedia and more at theburr.com.
This photograph of two men in front of Lowry Hall was taken in the 1940s. The image was originally printed in Kent State’s “A Book of Memories” and is now a part of the library’s archive photography collection. Lowry Hall is one of the first buildings established as part of the Kent State University Normal School, founded in 1910 to train public school teachers. This final shot represents Kent State then and now.
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- Field trips to museums, villages and cities are an integral part of the program and allow students to see first hand what has been discussed in the classroom.
- Students live in fully furnished apartments in the historic center of Florence within walking distance of the Palazzo dei Cerchi, a 13th Century palace combining start-of-art classrooms with the historic frescos and wooden ceilings of Medieval Florence.

Scholarships are available to help with tuition and housing, and financial aid does apply to study abroad coursework.

Open to students enrolled in the schools of Communication Studies, Journalism and Mass Communication and Visual Communication Design.

For more information, contact
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