ISSUES YOU SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT RIGHT NOW

RACE
HOMESICKNESS
THE FUTURE OF THE GOP
ANIMAL WELFARE
GAMBLING
FAILURE TO DIAGNOSE
COLLEGE VETERANS
NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS
ANOREXIA NERVOSA
RELIGION
THE SCIENCE OF THE MIND
SOCIAL MEDIA USE
GUN CONTROL
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The College of Communication and Information (CCI) is one of the only colleges within the United States that has such a diverse combination of communication, information and visual disciplines within its schools. With its four schools — Communication Studies (COMM), Library and Information Science (SLIS), Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) and Visual Communication Design (VCD), CCI offers courses and opportunities, providing students a broad educational perspective and intensive training, preparing them to enter the job market with the skills needed to succeed.

According to a recent job outlook study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, communication skills rank first among most important job characteristics employers seek. Second and third are analytical skills and teamwork skills. Consider programs in CCI to teach you these necessary practices.

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Learn more at www.kent.edu/cci or email us at ccikent@kent.edu.
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The Supreme Court has upheld the constitutional validity of video games, yet politicians and pundits continue to blame games, not guns, for American gun violence. **By Matt Polen**

16 Keep It Clean
Potential employers are tracking your digital footprint. Fortunately, we've provided you with a guide to social media purity. **By Drew Parker**

20 Richard Stanislaw Q & A
The award-winning professor of political theory talks race, religion and the future of the Republican Party. **Interview by Anthony Dominic**

26 The 'G' Word
**Mark Haymond** explores the Vegas Strip of Canton, Ohio, as well as the faint line between gambling and "skill gaming."

31 We Are Sandy Hook
From Inauguration Day to the March on Washington for Gun Control, one student reflects on the responsibility Americans must face in the wake of tragedy. **By Daniel Moore**

36 The Real Reason for Gun Control
Since the 1999 Columbine High School killings, 183 people have been killed in school shootings; however, there were 19,392 firearm suicides in 2010 alone. **By Anthony Dominic**
"FOR ONCE, I DON'T THINK THIS BATTLE IS POLITICAL POSTURING. I REALLY THINK EVERYONE'S AFRAID. THE FACADE OF WASHINGTON IS ACTUALLY JUST A FACADE. THE BUSINESS-AS-USUAL DAILY GRIND OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE IS MERELY AN ESCAPE. THE GHOSTS OF NEWTOWN ARE HAUNTING CONSTITUTION AVENUE." – PAGE 34
A note from Anthony Dominic

The morning of Dec. 14 unraveled with a text message. "Over 20 children dead in CT." But it was only after reading the text message from my dad — and scrolling through aerial photos of Sandy Hook Elementary School — that I realized we, Americans, were living in another moment that felt as if it were torn from a page of fiction.

In the hours, days and weeks following the shooting, video game developers were forced to defend their games; filmmakers were forced to defend their films; even the Autistic Self Advocacy Network was forced to release a statement in which it urged "commentators and the media to avoid drawing inappropriate and unfounded links between autism or other disabilities and violence" (despite the fact that Sandy Hook shooter Adam Lanza was not autistic).

The president, in his initial address and Dec. 16 address in Newtown, said everything a president is supposed to say. Everything but the word "gun." He never said the word. In this issue, we say it more than 40 times. Matt Polen asks why defenders of the Second Amendment continue to disregard the First (page 12); Daniel Moore reflects on the responsibility Americans must face in the wake of tragedy (page 31); and I delve into the real reason for gun control (page 36).

I am so proud of this staff and the work they have accomplished. There was so much to say and so much to show, we had to add 16 pages — making this the biggest issue of The Burr in its 27-year history. When Laura Buterbaugh and Thomas Lewis founded this magazine, they sought to create a "tradition of journalistic excellence." It was not to be "a flimsy leaflet to be skimmed and tossed aside, but a quality publication to be read thoroughly and saved." This issue is about preserving that tradition. It's about launching a dialogue and having the conversations that matter.

In Caitlin Restelli's profile of Christina McVay (page 62), the Pan-African Studies professor opens up about May 4, 1970 and her ongoing 13-year project to renovate an all-black cemetery in Memphis, Tenn. McVay speaks of "sheer persistence," "full heartiness" and the importance of loving what you do.

Time and time again, we are reminded that life remains too short and too precious for anything less.
In this 1963 photo, President Bowman passes under the Front Campus archway, at the corner of Lincoln and East Main streets.

The 1963 issue of The Chestnut Burr was dedicated to George Bowman, Kent State's fifth and longest-serving president, who was retiring at the end of the spring semester. In a letter written that June, addressed to students, alumni, faculty and staff, Bowman, 70, conceded, "After so many rewarding years, I have mingled feelings about leaving, but time is catching up with me."

When Bowman assumed the presidency in 1944, Kent State consisted of 105 acres of property. When he left the office 19 years later, it consisted of more than 750 acres, including the 200-acre university airport. Campus additions during Bowman's presidency also included the health center and six dormitories to accommodate the growing student body.

One of Bowman's most significant contributions came in the fall of 1947, when he appointed Oscar W. Ritchie as a full-time faculty member. This made Ritchie the first African American professor to serve on the faculty of any public university in Ohio.

Bowman began teaching elementary school when he was 18. A veteran of World War I, he received his master of arts from Columbia University, as well as five honorary degrees throughout his career. In "A Most Noble Enterprise: The Story of Kent State University," William H. Hildebrand, professor emeritus of English, said, "Bowman had an assured air of command, gallant good manners, a resonant voice, and a generous nature. His fatherly demeanor and warm interest in people fostered a family feeling."

Bowman's era at Kent State was dubbed the "golden years" by the 1955 Chestnut Burr. After retiring, Bowman lived his remaining years in Kent with his wife Edith. He died on May 7, 1976, four days before what would have been his 83rd birthday.

The Chestnut Burr was Kent State's student-produced yearbook, published from 1914 to 1985. In 1986, students Laura Buterbaugh and Thomas Lewis transformed the yearbook into The Chestnut Burr Magazine, which was shortened to The Burr in 1988.
## MONDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Show</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-12 PM</td>
<td>The Wake Up</td>
<td>conscious talk, indie, rap and underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 PM</td>
<td>Mainstream Apocalypse</td>
<td>indie rock, pop culture and local artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 PM</td>
<td>The Constant Detour</td>
<td>happy, upbeat, silly, dance party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
<td>The New Noise</td>
<td>pop-punk, 90’s emo and alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 PM</td>
<td>All I Ever Wanted Was A Radio Show And I Got One</td>
<td>indie, alternative, rock and music talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 PM</td>
<td>Sleazy Beatz</td>
<td>alternative, pop-punk, pop and weekend stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 AM</td>
<td>The Real is Back</td>
<td>hip-hop, rap, relationships and trending topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 AM</td>
<td>Flip The Tape</td>
<td>tapes, vinyl, underground, obscure, punk and alternative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## TUESDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Show</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-12 PM</td>
<td>Tuesday Tailgate</td>
<td>sports previews and recaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 PM</td>
<td>Soup for Sides</td>
<td>food, indices and oldies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 PM</td>
<td>Hipster Garbage</td>
<td>indie, alternative, rock and electronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
<td>Back To The Past</td>
<td>music history factoids, folk, jazz and blues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 PM</td>
<td>Kitty Kat Chat</td>
<td>improv, funny and random</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 PM</td>
<td>Euphoria Radio</td>
<td>classic rock, alternative and indie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 AM</td>
<td>League Radio</td>
<td>video game talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 AM</td>
<td>The Tex and Danny Show Part II</td>
<td>explosions and heavy metal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## WEDNESDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Show</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-12 PM</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 PM</td>
<td>Kickin’ It</td>
<td>football, soccer and everything in between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 PM</td>
<td>Animalistic Affirmation</td>
<td>classic rock, politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
<td>The Hit List</td>
<td>entertainment news and top 20 countdowns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 PM</td>
<td>Pretty Hair and Thunder (P.H.A.T.)</td>
<td>comedy, talk and hair-metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 PM</td>
<td>Sedateophobia</td>
<td>saving you from the silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 AM</td>
<td>Moontime Radio</td>
<td>indie, punk and folk musical adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 AM</td>
<td>Women Who Rock</td>
<td>females, feminists and feminism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## THURSDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Show</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-12 PM</td>
<td>Straight Talk Radio</td>
<td>funny and honest talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 PM</td>
<td>The JJ Morning Takeover</td>
<td>celeb, music and theater talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 PM</td>
<td>Mastering Ceremonies</td>
<td>local hip-hop, cipher, old school and R&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
<td>Black Noise</td>
<td>R&amp;B, soul, real talk and campus events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 PM</td>
<td>Three Guys and a Girl</td>
<td>three guys and a girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 PM</td>
<td>Word Play</td>
<td>pop-punk, rock and live in-studios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 AM</td>
<td>Power of Words (POW)</td>
<td>talk, hip-hop and conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 AM</td>
<td>Double J's Mixtape</td>
<td>country and hip-hop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## FRIDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Show</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-12 PM</td>
<td>As The Crow Flies</td>
<td>foreign music and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 PM</td>
<td>Elephant in the Room</td>
<td>philosophy, controversy and discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 PM</td>
<td>Sports With Shook</td>
<td>sports talk, entertainment and comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
<td>Finders Keepers</td>
<td>unsigned and undiscovered pop-punk/alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 PM</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>unicorns, pizza, glitter and music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 PM</td>
<td>The Future</td>
<td>indie, throwbacks and acoustic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 AM</td>
<td>Goon Squad</td>
<td>noise and experimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 AM</td>
<td>The Horizontal View</td>
<td>honest indie fun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## SATURDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Show</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-12 PM</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 PM</td>
<td>The Battle of the Ages</td>
<td>old and new school hip-hop and R&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 PM</td>
<td>Rubber City Rockhouse</td>
<td>local rock, indie and alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
<td>Get Stoked On It!</td>
<td>pop-punk, metal and hardcore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 PM</td>
<td>Face Value</td>
<td>alternative, hip-hop and music facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 PM</td>
<td>Radio Gravy</td>
<td>crabcrore, dancing, and Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 AM</td>
<td>Rage Radio</td>
<td>electronic dance music and dubstep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 AM</td>
<td>Radiodrome</td>
<td>zany talk and new music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## SUNDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Show</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-12 PM</td>
<td>Eclectic Electrocation</td>
<td>variety, improv, comedy and music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 PM</td>
<td>Hungover on a Park Bench</td>
<td>alternative, sports and video games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 PM</td>
<td>Hour of Glower</td>
<td>metal, electronic, rock and foreign music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
<td>A Double Shot of Sean</td>
<td>Kent State and pro sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 PM</td>
<td>Keeping It Classy</td>
<td>a classy mix of genres and movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 PM</td>
<td>Rik &amp; Rob Radio Rockstars</td>
<td>a rockapocalypse of music news, reviews and interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 AM</td>
<td>Flash of Metal</td>
<td>metal, hard rock and death metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-2 AM</td>
<td>Weekend Wind Down</td>
<td>alternative, rock and KSU news</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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THE GOOD

Darrell Hazell who?

The New York Times calls Kent a "flourishing 21st-century college town," with the "essential ingredients" for "attracting students and educated professionals."

Downtown Kent.

Kent State recognizes smoking as a public health issue and considers banning tobacco use on campus.

Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel sells out the M.A.C. Center for April 11.

Ori Archer will return to the field and the classroom this fall.
Approximately **seven percent** of eligible undergraduates voted for executive director in the 2013-2014 Undergraduate Student Government elections.

The **$440 overload fee** will go into effect for every student taking 17 or more credit hours this fall.

Daniel Fitzpatrick, a **convicted felon**, continues to teach justice studies courses.

Kent State ranks 11th on SeekingArrangement.com's list of fastest-growing "**sugar baby colleges**."

**Bottom-line governing:** Under the new state budget, contributions for public universities will be partially based on graduation rates, while funding for two-year colleges will be based on course completion.

Kent State **will lose all state funding** for remedial English and math courses by 2015.
Visit TheBurr.com for more illustrations.
YOU COULD BE PART OF THE EXCITEMENT.

If you’ve ever dreamed about being on the radio or TV, or you’ve always wanted to write articles or take photos, now’s your chance. Student Media is a student-run department engaged in providing news, information and entertainment to the Kent State University campus and surrounding community. You don’t have to be majoring in a media-related field. We train you!

Black Squirrel Radio has about 100 DJs! TV2 needs students to run cameras, anchor the newscasts, cover live sporting events, appear on shows and much more. The newsroom for the Daily Kent Stater, Kentwired.com and TV2 always needs more students to report, edit, write stories and take photos.

This year alone our students traveled to cover the College World Series of Baseball in Oregon. About 100 students worked to cover President Obama’s visit to campus in October. We sent students to Boston and Chicago to cover the election November 6.

You could have been part of the excitement.

Student Media needs diverse students of all majors and backgrounds to truly reflect all that is Kent State.

• GAIN REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE
• MAKE LIFE-LONG FRIENDS
• FEEL LIKE YOU BELONG
• HAVE FUN
• EXPRESS YOURSELF!

For information on how you can get involved, email Lori Cantor at lcantor@kent.edu.
The conversation has reached a breaking point as pundits and politicians blame video games, not guns, for American gun violence. The Supreme Court has upheld the constitutional validity of games as a form of art and speech, and stacking all of the scientific studies would stop a bullet. Yet even though the game is over, the debate rages on. Isn’t it time to get back to playing?
I have a confession to make: I play violent video games. I considered calculating the ratio of violent and non-violent titles in my collection, but I realized how unnecessary that would be. All of the games I play are violent, and I don't play them casually. I play them addictively, with an almost religious conviction. I play them because I'm looking for experiences I can't find in the real world. I want to fly a starship to a tropical jungle planet teeming with intelligent insectoid life, and then I want to eradicate the entire population — for no other reason than that I can.

On more than one occasion I have emerged from my veritable opium den after dozens of hours spent wading knee-deep in the undead. Left bleary-eyed and blinded by the sun, reflexes twitching, my paranoia will turn a person in my peripheral into a shrouded assassin, waiting to snuff me out. This doesn't scare me, though, because that isn't reality. This is reality: I've never struck another person in anger, and I have no history of mental illness. I'm a pretty normal person, despite some personality quirks that I'm willing to bet are common to most of us.

There are a lot of people in this world; a fraction of them suffer from potentially dangerous mental illnesses. A fraction of these people are gamers, and an even smaller fraction of those people physically harm others. Yet every single time there's been a horrific incident in which a disturbed individual takes the lives of others, it's our popular culture — games more than anything — that is thrust into the spotlight, despite any real evidence that entertainment is to blame.

In old arcade games like Donkey Kong and Pac-Man, you can't win in the traditional sense. These games have programming limits. Once you hit a certain level, the game's code breaks down and the graphics scramble, making it unplayable. This debate has reached its kill screen, and even the Supreme Court can't fix it. As the pundits start to talk the pixels start to blur.

Politicians are scrambling for answers in the wake of the Dec. 14 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. Our elected representatives know that American gun violence is troubling, but what they cannot agree on is how to handle it. One would reasonably surmise that the most effective way to deal with gun violence would be to re-evaluate current statutes on gun ownership and sales, but that's not happening. What is happening: President Obama recently created a task force, led by Vice President Biden, to assess cultural factors that contribute to gun violence. One of the first groups they met with was a cadre of video game developers. In attendance were the presidents and CEOs of organizations such as the Entertainment Software Association and the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB), as well as publishers like Electronic Arts, ZeniMax, Blizzard, Epic and others.

Though Biden admitted that gaming was not being targeted as a definitive source of violence among youth, the implication is there nonetheless. If the police are interrogating someone as a suspect in a crime, it's not because they want to talk; it's because they think there's a chance that person might have done it. In the wake of this meeting, President Obama called for the Centers for Disease Control to be allocated $10 million to research causes of gun violence, including media causes. This may very well result in a thoroughly researched study that conclusively proves that there is or is not a link between video games and youth violence. What it has already resulted in is the further scapegoating of gaming in the gun control debate. We're not talking about guns; we're talking about video games.

In a recent MSNBC interview with Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander, host Chuck Todd questioned the congressman about his hypothetical support for a bill regarding background checks on firearm purchases. Inexplicably, Alexander took this opportunity to spout off about video games, stating, "I think video games are a bigger problem than guns, because video games affect people." Alexander isn't the only one who believes this. At a Dec. 21 press conference, Wayne LaPierre, vice president of the National Rifle Association, was quoted saying, "Guns don't kill people. Video games, the media and Obama's budget kill people."

When Obama discusses skeet shooting in an interview with The New Republic, conservative pundits mock him. When Alexander and LaPierre make statements like these, it's tempting for gamers to do the same. But contributing to the degradation of the discourse isn't a wise. Pundits might resort to hyperbole, but gamers can't lest they reinforce the stereotype of the antisocial teenage basement dweller. It becomes hard to defend yourself as a gamer when you feel like the people in power look at you as either a social outcast or a massacre waiting to happen.

We seem to be incapable of having rational discussions on a national scale without relying on hyperbole and misdirection. Debates turn into heated personal arguments where people and ideas become pawns in an ideological chess match. And just like in chess, some players are better than others.
But in gaming, sometimes it's because the player has spent countless hours perfecting their skills.

Enter Player One: Democratic Sen. Leland Yee, a level 100 Holy Paladin in the crusade against violent video games. Yee sponsored a California law passed in 2005 banning the sale of violent video games to minors. Though it was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 2011, it was still alarming to many people, especially gamers. What was disturbing about this law was how unnecessary it was. The ESRB, analogous to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) for movies, rates the content of video games in the United States and Canada, and is completely voluntary for developers, publishers, and retailers. As voluntary as it is, it's practically an unwritten law in the gaming industry. Trying to release a game without an ESRB rating would be like trying to secure national release for a film that hadn't been submitted to the MPAA. It just doesn't happen, but this wasn't good enough for Yee.

However, it was good enough for the Supreme Court. In a 7-2 decision, the law was struck down as a violation of the First Amendment. The ruling determined: Video games are a constitutionally protected form of expression — meaning any legislation restricting sales due to violent content is unconstitutional. Staunch conservative Justice Antonin Scalia, of all people, was quoted as saying that "Psychological studies purporting to show a connection between exposure to violent video games and harmful effects on children do not prove that such exposure causes minors to act aggressively." If you think that changed Yee's mind, you'd be wrong.

Yee hasn't kept quiet about his opinions. In the wake of Sandy Hook, Yee remarked that "Gamers have no credibility in this argument. This is all about their lust for violence and the industry's lust for money." Though he apologized on Twitter, he only admitted that he "didn't use the best words." If gamers and gaming industry professionals aren't qualified to talk about the effects that gaming has on people, I don't think that anyone is — especially not a politician.

"Guns don't kill people. Video games, the media and Obama's budget kill people."
- Wayne LaPierre, NRA vice president

My favorite little treasure of a news story spawned from a University of Montreal press release in 2009. It's hilarious, and it also contains a valuable lesson about statistics and scientific studies. A researcher at the university was conducting a study to determine what effects, if any, that regular viewing of pornography had on the heterosexual male mind and his perception of women. Any scientific study of this type would need a control group, or in this case a group of heterosexual males in their 20s who had not viewed pornography. Not surprisingly, the researchers couldn't find any. Do you see where I'm going with this?

If you're trying to find a kid that doesn't play video games, you're going to have a hard time. According to a 2008 survey conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 97 percent of children from ages 12 to 17 play video games, including 99 percent of males and 94 percent of females. These numbers are going to continue to grow. This makes it impossible to generalize about the effects that video games have on children, considering that they're all playing them. If video games and violence among children had a definite link, wouldn't it be obvious?

According to a 2007 study conducted at the University of Southern California, between the 1993 release of "DOOM", one of the original first-person shooters, and the time of the study, the rate of violent crimes among children fell by 77 percent. "DOOM" is the epitome of what politicians hate about violent video games. As the quintessential, stoic space marine, you travel through portals on a Mars military base, slaying demons with your trusty array of firearms — before winding up in Hell itself. There are pentagrams, demons and defiled corpses. My grandmother bought me this game when I was 9. She probably shouldn't have and likely had no idea what it was about. But it didn't turn me into a Satan-worshiping psychopath.

With the advent of 24-hour news networks, there's more pressure to fill air time with anything remotely interesting. It's not uncommon for a national tragedy such as Sandy Hook to receive days or weeks of nonstop coverage. With that degree of saturation, is it any wonder that people think our society is becoming more violent? The truth is it's not, at least not as far as our children are concerned.

Teenagers across the world are playing the same games that we are, and no other civilized country has the same problems with gun-related deaths. In a study on firearm fatalities conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the U.S. had 10.2
firearm deaths per 100,000 people in the year 2010. Japan and South Korea were barely on the charts, with 0.7 and 0.13, respectively. South Korea, in particular, is a country where the saturation of gaming culture far surpasses even our own.

Professional gamers in South Korea are treated like professional athletes in the U.S. Lim Yo-Hwan, one of the top-rated professional “StarCraft II” players, pulls in an annual salary of around $400,000 (before endorsements). While this isn’t NFL quarterback money, it shows how seriously South Koreans take their gaming. Yet as much as they’re gaming, they’re not killing each other in the way that we are. The problem isn’t the games; it’s us.

The not-so-secret thread tying this all together is that video games have become a scapegoat, just like comic books, movies, rock ‘n’ roll and every other cultural shift that came before. All we can do is make our opinions known — and we’re already doing that pretty well. Call me cynical, but someone like Yee would never bother to apologize for such disparaging comments if gamers didn’t make up a large part of his constituency. Games and gamers aren’t dangerous, and they aren’t going anywhere. Inevitably, politicians and pundits will stop vilifying violent video games, if only because they’ll have moved on to something else. Whatever the next rock ‘n’ roll is, it has my sympathies. B

The Entertainment Software Rating Board has been effectively (and transparently) regulating the video game industry for nearly 20 years

Consumers are more informed and minors are more restricted than ever before

ESRB Retail Council (ERC) members include Amazon, Best Buy, GameStop, Redbox, Target, Toys R Us and Walmart. These retailers participate in biannual “mystery shopper” audits, in which the ESRB evaluates in-store policy enforcement and website rating accuracy. For the former, actors under the age of 17 attempt to purchase Mature-rated games at a minimum of 100 retail stores. For the latter, the ESRB reviews approximately 100 webpages per member containing video game items.

Compliance level for in-store policy enforcement:

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<th>Month</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 2008</td>
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Compliance level for website rating accuracy:

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<th>Month</th>
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Across-the-board accountability

Publishers of ESRB-rated titles are contractually obligated to follow the “Principles and Guidelines for Responsible Advertising Practices.” The ESRB’s Advertising Review Council (ARC) monitors all publisher-sponsored media to ensure compliance; violators are imposed with sanctions, including monetary fines.

—ANTHONY DOMINIC
Keep It CLEAN

You are being followed. Potential employers are tracking your digital footprint, and they want to know everything about you (well, almost everything).

Ryan McNaughton, a career counselor with Kent State Career Services, said that approximately 90 percent of employers now consider each applicant’s social media presence.

“You can run but you can’t hide,” McNaughton said. “If you feel the need to be sneaky with your online presence, that says something in itself. If you can’t present yourself as you are, that’s a wake-up call to change.”

Fortunately, we’ve provided you with a guide to social media purity. Get cleaning.

BY DREW PARKER

Facebook

- Regularly review friends and likes for inappropriate content.

- Never use privacy settings to hide content that shouldn’t be there in the first place.

- Delete photos containing any alcohol, nudity or drug use.

- Be mindful of tagged photos, as well as wall posts from others.

Cross-network ground rule

Never misspell your name or use a middle name as a last name. Employers can search for applicants by email addresses, networks and schools.
Twitter

Unfollow celebrities or users with a vulgar presence.

Think before tweeting. Always.

Refrain from posting negative tweets. Instead, tweet about positive experiences in your academic, work and personal lives.

Use tasteful humor and displays of personality.

Use discretion when expressing religious and political views.

Linkedln

Use a professional profile photo.

Don’t exaggerate or misrepresent part-time jobs. If something isn’t impressive without excessive embellishment, leave it out.

Complete the “additional info” and “summary” sections. Use keywords potential employers may search for.

Refrain from requesting a connection too early. Wait until a substantial real-world connection has been made.

Simple Wash

Three Kent State students have made social media clean-ups easier. Using their backgrounds in computer science and electronic media, Camden Fullmer, Daniel Gur and David Steinberg developed SimpleWash, an application that searches users’ Facebook profiles for a preset list of words or phrases potential employers may find unacceptable.

The program highlights obscenities on users’ Facebook walls, status updates, tagged photos, liked pages, links, photos and comments, suggesting the user remove the content.

The students started developing the app in January during the University of Pennsylvania’s PennApps Hackathon competition, which hosted 120 teams. Hackathons are events where teams work to produce an application that is both creative and beneficial to users.

Gur said partying is part of college life and suggested students should still be able to land jobs regardless of their social lives.

"Employers may find it weird that you don’t have a presence online because you’re hiding your Facebook or other social media,” Gur said. “I was applying for internships last summer, and it took me hours to clean up my wall. We developed this so students don’t have to be punished for having fun.”

The three SimpleWash developers are now working to incorporate Instagram and Twitter into the application. Gur says they want to include a photo recognition service that will find employer “no-no’s,” like red Solo cups and beer bottles.

How to use SimpleWash

1. Go to http://simplewash.login and select “get started.”
2. Log into Facebook, allowing the app to access Facebook content.
3. Select “start.” SimpleWash will highlight all questionable text. Select highlighted text to edit or delete.

*Users can also identify specific words or phrases by using the custom search bar at the top of the page.
Whether or not Sergey Brin and Larry Page meant for Google to serve as the modern Magic 8 Ball nearly 15 years after its founding, some questions are just too embarrassing to ask a friend or professional. But just what are people typing into the search bar? We let autocomplete do the dirty work.

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We’re creating a buzz.

ksubuzz

Go to KSUbuzz.com.
AD: Let’s talk about the president coming to Kent State in September.
RS: OK.
AD: In an interview two days before [President Barack] Obama’s visit, [Kent State President] Lester Lefton told me the university “would and will” welcome [Mitt] Romney as warmly as it was welcoming Obama.
RS: Uh huh.
AD: I would safely assume Romney made a calculated decision to skip big public universities like Kent State. Then, a little over a month later, Obama won 60 percent of voters under [age] 30.
RS: Yes, these are demographic difficulties for the [Republican Party]. And you see the GOP right now wrestling with these sorts of things. Going back to [President Richard] Nixon, and even earlier, there was a decision that the GOP made — and it worked through a lot of election cycles — that they were going to bet on white men, to a large extent. And southern white men and Catholic white men that were in labor unions and so on. Republicans believed, wrongly, 2008 was an outlier. That the turnout of the youth and minority voters was just an outlier and that they could continue with this southern, white America strategy. 2012, I think, should be seen as a coda to 2008.
AD: Perhaps the Tea Party in 2010 was the flash in the pan — which it certainly was not perceived as being so at the time.
RS: Yeah, and that was one of the things that confused Republicans. I think it was sloppy thinking, and there are other structural problems. Republicans have been so anti-intellectual and anti-“The Academy.” Republicans were discouraged from going to graduate school and into social sciences. And so all the people who did graduate school and social sciences over the last 30 years — the vast majority are Democrats. So that means everyone out there who knows how to read a poll and do social science research — most of them are Democrats. And that’s also a problem.
AD: [In 2012] Obama secured 93 percent of the black vote, he secured 73 of the Asian vote, he secured 71 percent of the Hispanic vote — the last of which surprised some conservatives. The day after the election, Marco Rubio said, “The conservative movement should have particular appeal to people in minority and immigrant communities who are trying to make it. And Republicans need to work harder than ever to communicate our beliefs to them.” So which conservative beliefs will those who are trying to make it connect with?
RS: Oh, well, pull yourself up by the bootstraps and work hard and play by the rules, and that is rewarded. Those
are old conservative talking points, if not genuine philosophical points. For immigrant families, that can be appealing. By and large — gross oversimplification — you come to America to work hard and make your way. And if you work hard, you're going to be rewarded, and it's going to be better for your kids than it was for you. All that sort of come here tired, poor, huddled masses sort of stuff. That aspect of the Republican philosophy could definitely get traction in that community. Someone who is willing to be a migrant worker, or work in a factory, or open up a shop and work their ass off for 100 hours a week — that is not someone who is asking for handouts; that is not someone who wants to see taxes redistributed to people who aren't working. [President] George W. Bush understood this and tried to drag the Republican Party toward a friendly —

AD: He really did. He was sort of the last major GOP player to try and get that conversation moving forward.

RS: Yes. And he got —

AD: No support.

RS: No. And Marco Rubio — he can embody this. Although, as a Cuban American, this gets into complicated racial identity issues. A Cuban American from Florida in a lot of ways does not have a lot in common with a Mexican American who lives in Ohio. But the bigger problem I see for Republicans — Rubio's right — the demographics of the Republican party are such that the party activists — the people who are coming out to the precinct meetings and doing the work, the Tea Party folks — they are way more anti-immigrant than the party establishment wants them to be. So it's going to be hard for Marco Rubio and so on to convince Tea Party ilk in western states to reform their immigration policies. And America is welcoming to immigrants — melting pot and all that — but xenophobia is also a big characteristic of our political culture.

AD: Right. In a conversation I had with Professor [Erik] Heidemann several weeks ago, he said that he didn't believe simply putting Rubio on the ticket in 2016 will guarantee Hispanic votes. Thoughts?

RS: Yeah, it might not even guarantee a win in Florida, in part because of the Cuban American aspect of it. For interesting reasons, the particular circumstances of Cuban Americans are politically different, and their political issues have been distinct from other Hispanic Americans. So one, just putting a brown face up is not really going to get a lot of traction because it's more complicated than that. But also, there are these things built in, and this is another of these real dangers for the Republican Party. The best predictor of how someone voted is how they voted last time. The Democrats have done an effective job and the Republicans have shot themselves in the foot, in terms of training Hispanics to be Democrats. Republicans campaigned hard against getting into World War II, and Jews have been Democrats ever since. And Republicans tried to stop the Civil Rights Act, and African Americans are loyal Democrats. And Republicans have been harsh on immigration and won't even consider the DREAM Act. And they maybe have already crossed that event horizon where Hispanics just are Democrats now. And we can chip away at that a bit, but putting [Supreme Court Justice] Clarence Thomas up on the Supreme Court did not move African Americans to become Republican. And if Herman Cain had gotten the nomination it would not have moved that needle very much at all.

1 An acronym for Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors, the DREAM Act is a Senate bill that would provide residency to illegal aliens of “good moral character” who arrived in the U.S. as minors, graduated from U.S. high schools and lived in the country for at least five years prior to the bill's enactment.
**AD:** Address this assumption that whites vote for Obama for his policies and blacks vote for Obama because he’s black. Slate was really pushing [this] the day after the election: Michael Dukakis received 89 percent of the black vote in 1988. This was happening 20 years ago.

**RS:** Yeah. It’s just wrong, I would say. And there were a couple good Slate pieces on whites voting for Mitt Romney. That is just as racialized, and arguably more racialized, than blacks voting for Obama because of the way the numbers moved. And we have historic and real reasons why blacks are Democrats. And that Barack Obama is black did not move the needle that much. And Mitt Romney being white did seem to move the needle. I mean, we should talk about race. These are aspects of the American republic. But to sort of take as a normative starting point that white is neutral somehow is wrong-headed.

**AD:** And bouncing off of what you were saying about Rubio and the Hispanic vote, Dukakis also got 70 percent of the Hispanic vote — and that was 20 years ago. Obama got 71 percent. This hasn’t changed.

**RS:** Yeah. And at some point those things lock in. You know, not locking in forever. But people, ethnic groups, regions of the country get into these habits of voting. And party I.D. is one of these things that are inscribed into us from a young age and over generations. And the Republicans have been betting on the white vote for several generations, and Democrats put in with African Americans and [the] Civil Rights act, and so on — from the early ’60s on. And that is the explanation, not that whites somehow are enlightened.

**AD:** This is something you and I spoke about before: Was Jon Huntsman [Jr.] the presidential candidate the GOP wasn’t ready for?

**RS:** Yes, in a sense. He would be that sort of thoughtful, moderate, Rockefeller sort of —

**AD:** I mean, certainly, you can look at his record as governor — he’s fiscally conservative. But he also said the GOP has “zero substance,” are “too far to the right” and have a “serious problem in becoming the anti-science party.”

**RS:** Yes. And I think that anti-science aspect, the anti-intellectual, Huntsman saw that as a problem. But that gets back to this postmodern dilemma.² [Science and intellect] — that’s not what we want. And Huntsman, by insisting that we all do honest math in these postmodern times — that’s a loser. We don’t want to do honest math. So, Huntsman loses. I think it would be possible to construct a character around Huntsman, but he was not a good candidate. His rollout — all these different things — he did not understand how to cultivate an image in the way of a Rick Santorum or Herman Cain.

**AD:** A fiscally conservative approach is one matter, but these greater social issues that Huntsman was referring to — the positions on gay marriage, scientific research, secularism — would you argue that these are seriously threatening the GOP’s long-term existence?

**RS:** [Pauses.] I think that they are larger threats than that. I think that anti-science is a problem beyond party identification. That’s a large cultural threat. Those are genuine, deep threats to the American republic. And for this democratic republic to exist — at least its current form — it requires rational discourse.

**AD:** How important is it that this discourse and our political decisions are based upon universal values, not religion-specific values?

**RS:** Part of it goes to the very nature of representation. If it’s a member of the House of Representatives, they’re charged mostly with representing, in a pretty close way, the interests of their districts. A senator and then the president or a Supreme Court justice — they are more deliberative by design. They’re more deliberate offices. And so, therefore they are drawing upon their expertise, their experience — which could include their religious convictions. And I

>²"In the modern, the value of things, the truth of things, were connected to something real. We believed that facts were true, for instance. In the postmodern, the notion that facts are true is contested. Truth is entirely up for grabs. This is where we get the post-factual aspects of postmodernity. In the old days, if politicians said something that was factually untrue they would lose their credibility. Now, in fact, politicians can say things that are factually untrue and in many instances they actually are rewarded." — Richard Stanislaw

"I think that anti-science is a problem beyond party identification. That’s a large cultural threat. Those are genuine, deep threats to the American republic.”

- Richard Stanislaw
think the important thing is that the candidates are upfront about those things. So if someone is going to be making decisions based upon their religious convictions, the voters ought to know that. And if the citizens of the seventh district of Mississippi want a member from the House of Representative who makes all of their decisions based on what the Easter Bunny tells them, then so be it. That's not how I would choose my representative, but —

**AD:** Right. So, for re-election's sake, many conservatives may have to face this sort of call — that they have to make political decisions that directly conflict with their personal values. For example, in the "The Epistle to the Romans" it's established that in God's eyes homosexuals are deserving of death. So, an elected official who self-identifies as a Christian — likely meaning he or she recognizes the Bible as divine word — is accepting of this passage. Is he or she capable of supporting legislation in support of gay marriage?

**RS:** They ought to be. And this goes back to the very nature of our government. Individuals are religious, but we have an explicitly secular Constitution. This is not to say there isn't religion in America or the religious history in America is not important. And in many ways you can describe America as a Christian nation, in the sense that it was founded on this whole Puritan sort of thing. But the Constitution, on the other hand, is a godless document. And the way the Constitution functions is based on reason, based on precedent, based on the Constitution as the highest law. No less than John Locke argued that to make any sort of claims about someone's superiority, or to condemn someone on morality, that's playing God. I'm not directly familiar with that passage in Romans, but the way you describe it is: God condemns. Well, John Locke would say let God condemn, and these are civil matters. And we need to run society. And just because America allows gay marriage, does that compel God to?

**AD:** God's jurisdiction?

**RS:** If God's going to condemn gay people, God's going to condemn gay people — whether or not the state of Washington grants gay marriage. I'm sure those Christians think their god is more powerful than the Supreme Court. So, one, they shouldn't be threatened by it. This is the way many pro-choice Catholics deal with it. So, [Andrew] Cuomo, and others who are other prominent practicing Catholics who are pro-choice —

**AD:** Especially Cuomo.

**RS:** Yeah. Their responsibility is to the Constitution, to their constituents, and the civic law is that we treat people equally. And that we have a right to privacy. And these are our civil principles. And whatever person does not want to get gay married, they should not get gay married. But that's a wholly different concern than the civic authority.

**AD:** What's your responsibility as an educator in terms of how you shape this discourse in the classroom?

**RS:** Part of the charter, the purpose of Kent State as a public university, is cultivating good citizens and so on. And arguably, in political science, we even have an even more acute responsibility in that sense. I want people in my classes and more broadly to be good, careful thinkers, to cultivate some skills of reading and writing and speaking and rationality, and some analytical analysis. I think that people who teach a policy class, there may be some areas of policy that we need to be focusing on. Clearly climate change is one of these huge things that we need serious discourse about. We have one political party that refuses to talk about it. It lets the other party off the hook. Democrats just automatically win the argument because they are actually reading the science. And Republicans are officially refusing. And that's no good for any of us. If we're going to come up with good policy solutions to this real problem, we need to have an honest full debate.

**AD:** In your experience, where do students go wrong in their approach to political thought?

**RS:** Where do they go wrong? [Pauses.] I would say the biggest failure period is not reading enough. This is from [First Year Experience] sort of advice [and] throughout one's academic career. People should be reading more. The minimal requirements professors make in classes? That should be the bare minimum that someone, like — in my sort of classes? One read of the things I assign is insufficient. I don't know if that's a cop out [laughs].

**AD:** No, I don't think so. You can't Sparknotes your way through "City of God."

**RS:** No. But one of the problems is that you sort of can Sparknotes your
way through “City of God.” But the fact that you can pass a class or fake your way through, such that you get a grade that is accessible to you, that’s entirely the wrong way to look at it. And that’s unfortunate. But that doesn’t kill the material. That doesn’t kill the text.

**AD:** You’re now the adviser to the College Republicans. What do you say to the conflicted young conservative?

**RS:** Conflicted. How so?

**AD:** Conflicted over party leadership, party values —

**RS:** I think this is an interesting moment to be a Republican. Politics is fascinating. The Republicans need to sort out what kind of party they are, and who they think America is becoming, and there are a lot of ways forward. This ought to be an exciting, fun time. Because young people can get involved in remaking the Republican Party for at least the next cycle or two.

**AD:** You look like you’re really struggling to hold back a smile.

**RS:** [Laughs.] Well, yes. Well, I enjoy it. I enjoy watching it. There is a little bit of schadenfreude in the pleasure I derive from watching them inflict pain on each other.

**AD:** Do you foresee a future in which a Republican candidate can come to big public university like Kent State and entertain an audience of nearly 7,000 people?

**RS:** I think — no, not really. Not in the Midwest. Maybe somewhere.

Visit TheBurr.com to continue our conversation with Professor Stanislaw.
“Skill Game” parlors are popping up in cities statewide, causing headaches for lawmakers. In these Rust Belt Vegas joints, the vibrant neon lights often come with a generous helping of gray.

If you don’t know it’s there, chances are you will drive right by The Golden Nugget without a second glance. Set back from the street and behind a restaurant, it’s a place that just wants to blend in. Over the main doors there is still a sign for a childcare facility that was there before The Golden Nugget moved in. It is not advised that you drop your kids off here now.

From the outside, it could be any other business on Whipple with a locked door and a security guard. At the front door, a jovial staff member greets you and looks you up and down before letting you in. If you are geriatric, there is even less scrutiny as she lets you right in, like a Boca Raton nightclub. Once inside, head over to the main counter. The woman there will have you sign in — yes, first name only is fine, just like Alcoholics Anonymous. Walk around, get a lay of the land and look for an appealing machine. This one looks good, it has the beaming face of Kenny Rogers on it. What could go wrong?

It is the Bellagio of Whipple. It takes up at least seven storefronts. The landlords must have pitched a tent when The Golden Nugget set up shop. In the land of decaying and empty plazas, this one is nearly full.

The parking lot is full of big, American sedans, Cadillacs and Buicks — the telltale V-6 and V-8 chariots of the greatest generation. Inside, everyone is a “honey” or “darling.” The staff walks from room to room, offering players drinks or snacks and generally acting friendly. At lunch, they may roll through the gaming floor with a cart
of fried bologna sandwiches. There are bowls with hard candy, just like at grandma's. The bathrooms are clean enough to eat a fried bologna sandwich in. With its courteous staff, older, white clientele and immaculate bathrooms, The Golden Nugget feels closer to a Chick-Fil-A than a speakeasy — or maybe a dialysis clinic that cleans the body of financial security, one red cent at a time. Either way, I hear the bologna is delicious; seriously thick slices.

Toward the back of a smaller corner room, a man in a boiler cap and a woman with antigravity hay hair are discussing what machines have been paying out. He motions to one. "$70 a couple of weeks ago," he says, nonplussed. Like almost all of the players here, he seems unimpressed with the machine he is playing, as though treating it with contempt will make it want to try harder, pay out faster. He scans the room, maybe looking for the next big winner, glancing for a second at the machine he was just describing. He seems to practice the unseen math of a gambler, rational and irrational personal calculus about where the money is due to drop and stays put. There is a sign warning players that they can't play more than one machine at a time, which means that this has been an issue before. The grass really is always greener.

There are hundreds of machines in four big rooms. Blur your eyes and take in just the colors, and the room becomes a field of flowers, each one evolved to draw in a certain type of pollinator (see list, page 29). There are at least 60 active players on a Wednesday afternoon.

The games chime and pop a rising crescendo of digital tones as each play unfolds. Every play is an 8-bit drama, with a soundtrack that builds the tension of even a nickel machine to nail-biting levels. With so many machines, the effect is like an orchestra where each instrument plays a scale to its own beat.

The games are designed to appeal to men and women of a certain age who have money and a little bit of time to spend it. They are basically the same thing in different packaging, but that packaging is all over the place. Where else would aliens, kittens, sixties sitcoms and Sea Monkeys share visual real estate?

"Where else would aliens, kittens, sixties sitcoms and Sea Monkeys share visual real estate?"
branding. It's like being in a Tokyo grocery store, except instead of delicious and exotic new cookies, the shelves are lined with machines that take money and turn it into what exactly? Thrills? Endorphins?

Slot machine cabinet designs are the purest marketing out there, an immediate telepathic signal made to inspire giving without the guarantee of getting something in return. What they offer is ethereal — a pleasing pop of a certain synapse or the release of some anesthetic brain chemical. If someone has chosen to be near the machines, they are there for a reason, and the large variety of styles is just adding flavor to a meal that is inevitable.

Contemporary pop culture references start and end at “Antiques Appraisal,” a game modeled after Antiques Roadshow. “Kenny Rogers’ Gambler” is possibly the only use of the G-word in the place. On Kenny’s machine, the face of The Gambler beckons the player to test their skills. “That Girl” is modeled on a television show that ran from 1966 to 1971. “Kitty Glitter” has a kitty on it.

One of the games available to play is called simply “World War II.” A man in the corner of the screen (if you can call 15 pixels a man) fires a bazooka in what appears to be bunkers containing Japanese soldiers. Each bunker has a number on it, and when the rocket hits one, tiny stylized soldiers flail toward the screen.

Up front, Chris works the door. A group of players, older folks who are dressed to the nines for a day out, smile and greet her by name as they pass. She can’t remember all of their names, but they know her. “There is only one of me,” she says. Chris believes that The Golden Nugget and other places like it fill a vital role in the community, providing a clean and safe place for older folks to have fun. Her enthusiasm doesn’t spread to all of her competition. She believes that some of the smaller operations put themselves at risk by staying open all night, but admits that they do offer a level of excitement that is missing at the quiet Golden Nugget. She looks over at the joint across the parking lot. “They have been robbed three times,” she says.

Chris either knows something the police do not or is employing a marketing strategy based on hearsay. The Stark County Sheriff’s office only has record of two incidents at the place she mentions. Both were vehicle-related.

If The Nugget breaks the mold for gaming parlors, the place Chris nods to — which shall remain nameless — is the mold. A true parlor. It is little more than a single room, thirty feet by twenty, packed with three rows of machines, chairs and ashtrays. Everything’s a bit packed. Most of the players chat among themselves. The crowd is younger than that at The Nugget and not quite as dapper.

Deodorizers mix with smoke to make the place smell like an apple pie baked over a tire fire.

As in many of these spots, the memo about the smoking laws has been misfiled, evidently. There is a pattern with these places, a sort of social stratification based on smoking. Painting with a broad brush, the places that are full of smoke are the same places that stay open all night — and the kind places the older, more affluent players avoid. I picture the antigravity hay hair woman walking in here and clutching her purse tightly.

An attendant sits behind a counter minding the door or making change. The machines are a mix of old and less old — mostly old. There are baskets of candy on the counter: Bazooka bubble gum and sugar-free chocolates. At lunch, there is free
In Vegas, high rollers are never thirsty. On Whipple, they are never hungry, even in the low-end joints.

The crowd is ethnically diverse. There are white people, black people, people who believe they have the skills to pay the bills or maybe the luck. There are hoodies and puffy coats. There are easy laughs. When someone new comes in, most of the other players look up from their machines and greet them but rarely by name. Here is the speakeasy flavor one expects from a neighborhood gambling parlor: camaraderie and hints of smokiness.

Attorney General Mike DeWine is not a fan.

The state has been trying to find a way to regulate or shutter these places for years. Every attempt to regulate them has failed, with owners adapting to the new laws or simply ignoring them. The last attempt was made in the fall of last year, when Ohio House Bill 605 died a quiet death on the floor of a lame-duck session in the statehouse. It would have banned cash payouts and capped prize values at $10, effectively outlawing parlors.

"If it was my choice, we would do away with them," DeWine says in a phone interview. DeWine is not fond of gambling in general, and he isn't shy about that. Still, he maintains that his opinion about gambling has little to do with his opinion about skill games parlors.

DeWine says that if the system was designed from scratch, there is no way lawmakers would create a situation like it exists now, where these places operate in the shadows, without any oversight. He sees a culture ripe for exploitation by criminals who need a place to launder money or perpetrate other crimes, maybe even in other countries.

"In at least one case we tracked money from these places going to Russia," DeWine says.

In a broad sense, gambling is illegal in Ohio outside of charity events and sanctioned casinos or race tracks. Currently, these places are unregulated, at least on the state level. Local townships or municipalities get a small taste of the action. Jackson Township, for example, charges each business $4,000 a year and $100 per machine, according to township officials.

DeWine says that owners contend that what they are doing is no different than a sweepstakes at a fast food place. The consumer buys a 'phone card' with a set amount of money, after that what they do with it is up to them. At some places there is not even a card involved; players feed bills directly to the machine. The legality of the whole affair is like an afterthought.

Across the parking lot at the Whipple Sevens, Leonard and Bill are making their entrance. Bill visits five or six gaming parlors a day, by his own estimation. Leonard is the classic sidekick, constantly deferring to Bill on the tough stuff. They look to be in their mid-60s.

Bill spins a dark tale about the consolidation of the gambling business by state-backed casino owners. He doesn't plan on going to the casino in Cleveland, even if the state outlaws local parlors.

"If I am going to lose, I want to do it locally, to local people," he says. "It's all about greed. Dan Gilbert, who owns the one in Cleveland and the Mountaineer, is a billionaire and it's not enough money for him. He owns Quicken Loans and the Cavaliers, but he still don't want the little man around here to make any money. I am not driving to Cleveland to spend thirty or forty bucks, when I can come right close to home and lose my money locally."

Bill doesn't say where he will go to gamble if the state manages to close these places, but he doesn't look worried. "A gambler will always find a place to play," he says. B
LUNA NEGRA, ON NEWSSTANDS NOW

Luna Negra is Kent State's literary publication dedicated to publishing poetry, short stories, photography, and artwork.

Visit our website lunanegramag.com or e-mail us at lunanegramag@gmail.com.
I. The Storm Surge

A rare dusting of snow blankets the National Mall as we arrive at the Washington Monument. A wintry haze veils the late-morning sun as we approach a crowd of thousands. Somewhere in there is Arne Duncan, the U.S. Secretary of Education, explaining how he is here today as a dad, not a politician.

"This is Starkeisha Reed, who at 7:30 in the morning was in her living room getting ready for school and was shot by an AK-47. This is Claire Holden, who was on the bus going home from school." He's shaking up. When he was CEO of Chicago Public Schools, he says, they buried children like Reed and Holden every two weeks due to gun violence.

I crane my neck and study the faces around me. The rally, billed as purely a product of grassroots activism, a proverbial march on Washington for stricter control of our nation's firearms, includes a fairly accurate cross-section of America's melting pot. Some wave factory-sealed posters spinning clean AR-15s as monstrous villains. "STOP NRA!" they proclaim. Others carry the name of someone they knew.

My roommate Joe Reino and I try to get closer to the stage, but the crowd is too dense. We settle next to a few older women with wild tufts of red hair — possibly grandmothers. They're not waving or flaunting but holding their signs resignedly at their sides: "We Are Sandy Hook."

I heard the Dec. 14 news through the static of an airport taxi-cab radio. I had landed in the far southwestern enclave of the United States, descending from a clear sky upon the cliffs of sunny San Diego, visiting a friend. It was only the second time in my life my jaw uncontrollably dropped, my stomach churned with disbelief and I shook my head, whispering, "Goddamn."

I texted my mom, an elementary school teacher back home. I talked to a few of my friends. My Facebook blew up with posted anger and typed-out sorrow, but no one had much to say that really meant anything. In my motel room by the bay, I spent the afternoon inside, blinds drawn, two feet away from the television as the president cried at the podium. As the police gave updates.

As the news recycled through the same helicopter aerials of the school.

I turned off the TV after awhile, numb and introspective. I walked by the water until night darkened my view. It was now overcast, chilly and raining. I was 2,800 miles and three time zones away from the blood of Newtown, Conn., but distance didn't seem to matter.

Human tragedy forges a connection that cannot be elevated into eloquent poetry or stamped into perfect prose. Rather, it's the moments of reaction — those hours, days, weeks, months that follow — in which we vicariously contrive some kind of meaning. That night by the water, I suppose I was chasing that meaning. I was asking the questions for which there were not answers.

For me, as the nation collectively took a few silent days of grief, I tried to enjoy the rest of my California trip. During the lazy holidays with my family, I tried to avoid news coverage of the child funerals. I tried to ignore the flags frozen at half-staff, while the flag of death, invisible and invincible, cracked in the wind.

In January, I moved to Washington.
Daniel Moore, senior news major, stands at the Silver Spring Metro platform. He did not anticipate the revelatory experience he had during his spring semester in Washington D.C.

Then came the storm surge.

II. Out of the Cave

“This time — this time will not be like the times that have come before,” Joe Biden booms through my kitchen. “We will take this fight through the halls of Congress. We’re going to take this to the American people.”

“They better be very careful,” Joe Scarborough warns me as I shudder in my morning bath towel, fumbling with breakfast. “Republicans better be careful and think twice before they make their next move.”


From the couch in my apartment, seven miles away from Capitol Hill, I can’t turn the TV off. Public opinion polls proving some pundit’s point flash on the front of the evening news. The talking heads espouse their bias more fervently than I’ve ever seen. The ideologue revels in the chance to be heard and agreed with.

“Finally, Democrats are getting out of Plato’s cave when it comes to guns and are not fearful of their own shadow,” explains political strategist Chris Lehane. “Now you have Democrats who recognize —” Slam. I’m out the door and beginning my morning Metro ride with the rest of Washington.

During my first days in the nation’s capital, I take some long walks along the mineral-blue Reflecting Pool. I gaze at the Washington Monument, trying to glean some wisdom from its original construction. I peer through the iron gates of the White House, thinking mildly conspiratorial thoughts, wondering who inside was cooking up what scheme in which area of the world. On the marble steps of the Lincoln Memorial, I crane my neck to study the 16th president’s resolute countenance and his rigid backbone. I saunter by the east portico of the U.S. Capitol Building, then around the West Front where thousands of empty chairs await a new presidential term.

Change?

Rhetoric. In Washington, it chokes the daily commute like Beijing smog. It fills the shallow news hole of countless media outlets stationed here and following the talking points like salivating dogs. It commands the front page and the lead story. It
encircles ethereal concepts of liberty and the pursuit of happiness and turns life into an abstraction. There's no conscious “agenda setting” as you may have learned in school, but rather a default setting. Rhetoric. Does it work? Does it bring change?

“I'm going to put everything I've got into this,” Obama promises on Jan. 16, while issuing 23 executive orders on gun control — flanked by children who had written to him. A few days later, the firearm market analysts report “unprecedented” sales of military-style assault weapons.

To counter the rise in sales, there were 2,783,765 background checks nationwide in December, up 38 percent from the month before. Suspicion plagued movie theaters, subways, high schools, courthouses and public arenas.

I'm in Washington a mere 10 days before an organized “March on Washington for Gun Control” creeps into my Facebook feed, liked, shared and posted. I RSVP for me and Joe, who is a Capitol Hill intern for Sen. Sherrod Brown.

After work, Joe will loudly imitate constituents who call to complain about the senator's inaction on a number of issues. “They'll say: ‘Are you listening to me?'” Joe quips. “Obama's gonna take away my guns, isn't he? You tell Sherrod Brown that — 'And I'm like, 'Sir, may I please take your name down? Sir? What town do you live in? Sir, please?'”

III. Armed Principles

A week before the rally, I'm standing on a patch of mulch on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol, watching the same man I had watched in California pause to wipe away tears. He's got his right hand raised, his left on Abraham Lincoln's Bible.

“I, Barack Hussein Obama, do solemnly swear...”

Obama's a speck from my view, but the audio is crisp and reaches me on the rebound of an echo. The sea of lawmakers flanks him, divided cleanly down the middle both literally and ideologically.

“...preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

“So help you God?”

“So help me God.”

“Congratulations Mr. President...”

Then comes the classic idealism that has defined the first black presidency: A call for action through unity and equality. A call for everyone to do their part to make the world just a little bit safer.

“We cannot mistake absolutism for principle, or substitute spectacle for politics, or treat name-calling as reasoned debate. We must act, knowing that our work will be imperfect.”

Two days later, I come back from a frigid late-night run and discover a sweaty, aggressive Wayne LaPierre, vice president of the National Rifle Association, under bright lights in Reno, Nev., responding to this concept of absolutism.

“Mr. President, you might think calling us absolutists is a clever way of name-calling without using names. But if that is absolutist, then we are as absolutist as our Founding Fathers and the framers of our United States Constitution. And we are proud of it.”

So that's what it's coming down to, I realize. Those are the sides in a battle that desperately needs compromise — in a city that has repeatedly failed to understand its meaning.

The night before the gun control rally I'm feeling a little homesick, gripping an overhead bar on the Metro. It roars past all thirteen stops from my office at the Student Press Law Center back to my temporary home in Silver Spring. Orange line to New Carrollton, a transfer at Metro Center, red line to Glenmont. Earbuds in and eyes glazed — the standard DC look. The train emerges from a tunnel and blurs by graffitied, gray structures that filter out the light. How quickly the land changes when you cruise at 10,000 feet. I'm beginning to find something similar in the large issues that I once thought were headquartered only in this city.

As an example, take something as ambiguously “inside-the-beltway” as LaPierre's absolutism rhetoric. As much as it struck a chord with Washington politicians, I remember leaning against the Portage County Courthouse on a warm September day as William Koberna smoked a cigarette and spoke softly about wanting to be the first in his family to earn a college degree. That ambition was crushed after the sophomore had a bad run-in with his financial aid office and posted angry, threatening messages toward the Kent State campus less than a week after the Aurora shootings.

He mumbled how his arrest in July was totally blown out of proportion after being picked up by national news outlets like the Associated Press and The Los Angeles Times. Without any prompting from me, he said he regretted it.

“I really didn't mean it,” he told me. “I loved it here. I just did one stupid thing and flushed it all down the drain.”

We talked about his favorite parts of Kent, his classes, his friends and even the downtown development projects that he will miss to some extent. He finished the smoke and went inside to chat with his dad and lawyer, who eventually advised him to leave and that his court hearing had been rescheduled.

If what the gun control debate
really comes down to is compromise, imperfect change toward the better, how do we gauge which imperfections are acceptable? Which liberties do we give up to make life in this country a little less imperfect? And should people like William Koberna be sacrificed for the greater good? For once, I don’t think this battle is political posturing. I really think everyone’s afraid. The facade of Washington is actually just a facade. The business-as-usual daily grind of the House and Senate is merely an escape. The ghosts of Newtown are haunting Constitution Avenue.

IV. We are Sandy Hook


“You know, I’m not doing this — I’m not here today because of what happened to me. I’m here today because I kept seeing what happened to me happen to so many other people — and nothing being done about it.”

He talks for two minutes about the need for everyone to call their congressman. He emanates a panicked, almost-naïve brand of hope, commonly found in a victim-turned-activist. He lofts textbook-metaphorical rah-rah’s like “today is the starting blocks,” while knowing or perhaps not knowing two-thirds of the crowd will leave their social media pledges unfulfilled.

“We need to challenge any politician,” Goddard is saying to the loudest ovation yet, “who thinks it’s easier to ask an elementary school teacher to stand up to a gunman with an AR-15 than it is to ask them to stand up to a gun lobbyist with a checkbook!” — the crowd’s energy is feeding the fiery crescendo of his speech — “We are America. We are Americans. We have overcome tragedies. We have overcome difficulties — once we realize we are better than this, that we can do better than this. That we don’t have to accept these [tragedies] as normal. We believe that. That’s why we’re here today.”

On the first floor of The Newseum — home of iconic journalism memorabilia through the ages — there’s an exhibit of Pulitzer Prize winning photos that displays captured moments of the most cruel human tragedy and suffering. The Vietnam War’s Napalm Girl in ’72. A Bangkook student publicly lynched in ’76. An Iranian execution by firing squad in ’79. A machete entering the head of a suspected Zulu spy in South Africa in ’91.

Mary Ann Vecchio’s infamous moment of despair in ’70 — her body collapsing in Kent State’s Prentice Hall parking lot over the lifeless, face-down body of Jeffrey Miller — still stands as a moment in time.

Whether the Connecticut tragedy amounts to a patchwork piece of paper signed into law or adopted socially among our communities, it’s going to speak volumes about how human we really are. After the Twin Towers turned to rubble, the country came together to fight a common enemy outside our borders and support an ostensibly obvious course of action — an invasion — that turned out to be, well, imperfect.

Sept. 11, 2001 was the first time my jaw dropped and I shook my head. Even as a 9-year-old with a limited worldview, my stomach churned. Sandy Hook was the second. In the Newseum gallery, as safely removed as I was, peering at tragedy like a scientist through a lens, it happens again.

I see the vulture waiting for a starving African child to die. I’m with the young couple in the surf as they realize their baby has been swept away by the tide. I can almost touch the firefighter cradling a bloodied baby pulled from the rubble in Oklahoma City in ’95.

Human tragedy forges a connection that cannot be elevated into eloquent poetry or stamped into perfect prose. Rather, it’s in the moments of grief and in the fear that it will happen again.

As I pass the photographs, it all finally becomes too much and I shake my head — “Goddamn.” It’s not that I haven’t contemplated war and famine and massacre before; I’ve always known these things existed. My personal fear lies in the answers to the questions that dogged me in California. That which justified a tang of pity for William Koberna; that wet my eyes at the Newseum; that maddened me with all I have experienced in Washington.

Newtown is our tragedy. We own it. Our jaws dropped together, we cried together and we half-staffed our flags together. But my greatest fear of all is that I will to sit here in my apartment, ride the train every day to work, see the sad headlines, and no one — not the government, the lobbyists or the American people — is going to do anything about it.
WE LOVE TO TELL STORIES

STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE

STORIES ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

STORIES ABOUT WHAT'S NEXT

THIS IS WHERE OUR STORY BEGINS

A STORY THAT IS truly Portage County
Suicide:
THE REAL REASON FOR GUN CONTROL
BY ANTHONY DOMINIC

When Americans speak of gun control, it is most often in the name of stopping potential killers from wreaking havoc in a public arena. In the nearly 14 years since the 1999 Columbine High School killings, 183 people have been killed in school shootings. However, despite the seemingly pervasive nature of public shootings, in regard to firearms, homicide isn’t claiming the most American lives.

In 2010 alone — the last year for which complete data is available — firearm suicides nearly doubled firearm homicides, 19,392 to 11,078, according to the National Center for Injury Control and Prevention (NCICP). Firearm suicides among college-age adults, or 18 to 25-year-olds, is at a decade high, with 2,054 deaths in 2010. And from 2001 to 2010, 19,687 18 to 25-year-olds committed suicide with firearms, exceeding all other suicide method totals combined.

To dispel a common myth about suicide, one wanting to end his or her life will not do so by any means necessary. One may attempt suicide, but the likelihood of succeeding without a firearm is relatively low. Dr. David Hemenway, the director of the Harvard Injury Research Center and a leading expert in firearm suicide, said in a phone interview that suicide attempts with firearms have an 85 percent fatality rate, whereas the rate of attempts with pills and cutting are less than 5 percent. In a 2004 study published in the Annals of Emergency Medicine, Hemenway found that fatality rates for firearm suicides exceeded even 90 percent in Northeastern states.

In a 2008 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, Hemenway concluded that approximately half of all suicide attempts are impulsive. Among those who attempted suicide, 24 percent took less than five minutes between decision and attempt; 70 percent took less than 60 minutes.

For those at risk, the issue is firearm access. Chapter 2923.126 of the Ohio Revised Code establishes that concealed carry licensees are not permitted to carry a handguns into “any premises owned or leased by any public or private college, university, or other institution of higher education.” However, handguns are permitted to be stored in locked motor vehicles. John Peach, chief of Kent State Police Services, said this is an area of concern, as cars are often broken into and stolen. On the weekend of Feb. 1, four vehicles were stolen within a mile of the Kent State campus.

Dr. Victor Schwartz, the medical director of The Jed Foundation, an organization devoted to suicide prevention among college students, asserted in a Skype interview that while “absolute restrictions” on guns would be safer, Ohio law limits the chances that someone will accidentally discharge a firearm or act in haste.

“If it takes longer or is more difficult to get at the gun,” Schwartz said, “it is that much more likely that someone else can intervene before something happens — and even small impediments will sometimes slow someone down enough that they have time to stop, think and consider their action.”

In late 2011, State Rep. John Adams introduced Ohio House Bill 256 to the 129th General Assembly, which, if passed, would have allowed for unrestricted concealed carry on Ohio campuses. Adams remained bill’s sole sponsor while it was in the State and Local Government Committee, a Republican-dominant standing committee, where it remained until the end of the legislative session.

Ryan Crawford, an aide to Adams, said while there are no plans to reintroduce the bill, Adams is speaking with sheriffs in his 85th district, who seek to develop a program in which teachers would be allowed to carry firearms in schools.

“We’re for Second Amendment rights anywhere and everywhere,” Crawford said. “Ohio House Bill 256] was a bill that did that. [Adams] introduced it because he thought it was right thing then and the right thing now.”

Members of Kent State Students for Concealed Carry on Campus did not respond to multiple interview requests to discuss the bill. According to its Campus Reform webpage, the group “serves two main functions,” which includes “dispelling common myths and misconceptions about concealed carry on college campuses, by making the public aware of the facts.” The second is to see that college students with concealed carry licenses are granted the “same rights on college campuses that [they] currently enjoy
in most other unsecured locations.”

The facts, said Schwartz, are that 30 percent of college students experience an alcohol binge every two weeks, and between six and 10 percent experience “significant suicidal ideation.”

“When you put those numbers together and add guns into the mix,” Schwartz said, “the potential for danger and mischief – not just suicide but homicides and accidents as well – is really kind of stunningly frightening.”

In a 2009 Morbidity and Mortality report, Dr. Alex Crosby, a medical epidemiologist with the NCICP, determined alcohol is an unquestionable component of suicidal behavior.

“It leads to disinhibition, and it can enhance feelings of hopelessness and depression,” Crosby said. “Alcohol impairs judgment and can lead to much more impulsive behavior. Any suicide prevention efforts must take that into account and address alcohol and substance abuse as well.”

That same year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the parent agency of the NCICP, studied a large sample of suicide victims post mortem; the finding was that one in four had been legally intoxicated at the time of death.

In his book “Private Guns, Public Health,” Hemenway drew a similar conclusion, asserting that substance abuse is one of the leading risk factors in suicide attempts, only behind mental disorders and in-home firearm access. The likelihood of fatality drastically increases when more than one risk factor applies.

Schwartz said the only myth about concealed carry on college campuses is the need to protect oneself from violent crimes, as one in every one million college students are homicide victims.

“If you really want to be safe, in the perspective of homicide, just go stand in the middle of your campus,” Schwartz said. “It’s probably – as compared to any place else you can be in the United States – the safest ground you can be standing on.”

Suicide method totals from 2001 to 2010 (ages 18-25)

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<td>MOTOR VEHICLE + FIRE/BURN = 19,351</td>
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Approximately nine out of 10 firearm suicides in this age range are committed by males

(90.97 percent male, 9.03 percent female)

Source: The National Center for Injury Control and Prevention
Get it.

Here.

Here.

And now, here.

Download the KentWired App today.
ROBBERSIES
and Mind Games

A look at one student's traumatic experience and the science behind why she's able to remember it all.

BY CASSIE NEIDEN

The Heist

Terry's Dairy, a mom-and-pop ice cream shop in Lorain, Ohio, was closing early. It was Oct. 13, 2011, and business was a little slow like it was every year around this time. The demand for ice cream dropped now that school was back in full-swing, and the hot summer air had changed to a cool fall breeze.

At 7:30 p.m. the three teenage girls on duty started to clean the shop. Each had a designated station: One was in the rear kitchen, another was at the front counter and Rachel Rivas, a junior psychology major, was on restroom duty, between the kitchen and the storefront. The ice cream shop was Rivas' part-time employer while she was in high school. She became close to the owners, Bill and Terry Haines, who brought her in like family, as they did with all their employees. Her best friend, Carley Evans, also worked there.

“The Dairy,” as she shortens it, was like a home away from home. Rivas was mopping in and out of the stalls and around the toilets that night. She recalls what she was wearing: a skinny, light blue pair of Forever 21 jeans, her new, black Reboks and her Terry's Dairy company shirt, when she heard someone storm into the store.

A young man dressed in a black hoodie, baggy jeans and a ski mask started shouting, “Open up the registers! Now! I have a gun!” as he waved it at Evans, who was at the front counter. Rivas turned abruptly to face her friend, then froze, clutching her mop. The restroom door was propped open by a wood block attached to a chain, which was attached to the wall. A glass door between the bathroom and the

“The first thing was: protect yourself,” she said. “Shut the door, lock it. Stay in there 'til you hear Mr. or Mrs. Haines' voice. The moment you hear their voice, you're OK.”

- Rachel Rivas
storefront allowed her to see Evans. Evans stood paralyzed, unable to speak, staring at the man. Rivas couldn't see him because the counter blocked her view, but Evans' body language reinforced her fear.

Rivas began frantically strategizing. “The first thing was: Protect yourself,” she said, “Shut the door, lock it. Stay in there until you hear Mr. or Mrs. Haines’ voice. The moment you hear their voice, you’re OK. Then I started saying, ‘If only I had my cell phone,’ because it was sitting in the back on the table. ‘If only I had my cell phone. I could have called 911. He could shoot my best friend.’ And that started going through my head. ‘How do I defend Carley? How do I get out to her? Should I grab this, should I grab that?’”

Once she realized that all she had was a mop, broom and bucket full of warm water to defend herself, she yanked the make-shift door prop by the chain (which her bosses would frequently scold her for, but this time she didn’t care) and let the door slam. As the door was closing, she saw the robber jump the counter to slam. As the door was closing, she saw the robber jump the counter to slam. As the door was closing, she saw the robber jump the counter to slam.

She realized that all she had was a mop, broom and bucket full of warm water to defend herself, she yanked the make-shift door prop by the chain (which her bosses would frequently scold her for, but this time she didn’t care) and let the door slam. As the door was closing, she saw the robber jump the counter to slam. As the door was closing, she saw the robber jump the counter to slam. As the door was closing, she saw the robber jump the counter to slam. As the door was closing, she saw the robber jump the counter to slam. As the door was closing, she saw the robber jump the counter to slam. As the door was closing, she saw the robber jump the counter to slam. As the door was closing, she saw the robber jump the counter to slam.

Bill Haines was sitting in the back room talking to another employee for the first few minutes. Though he could see Evans, he was unaware of what was going on. But once he saw the robber jump the counter, he jumped out of his seat and bolted toward the storefront shouting, “What the hell is going on here?”

By this point, the robber was standing in the middle of Haines and Evans. He pointed the gun at Haines, then turned and pointed it at Evans again. Then he suddenly panicked and ran out of the store empty-handed.

The Exposition

More than a year later, Rivas recalls the details of the event in Jazzman’s Cyber Café in the student center. She took in everything during those terrifying moments.

The perception of the details haven’t escaped her. The robber was only there for a few minutes, but to her, that was one of the longest nights of her life.

But why is that? When life-threatening moments happen, it may seem that for many of us, time is actually moving slower, and for a moment you may feel like Neo in “The Matrix”. Studies within the past six years, however, show that in these moments the brain doesn’t perceive time slower, but it records memories better.

Neuroscientist David Eagleman of the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas simulated a life-threatening free-fall experiment to discover that memory plays a slow-motion effect on our brains.

His experiment, published in 2007, involved a Suspended Catch Air Catch Device (SCAD) that allowed participants in his study to fall backwards off of a 150-foot tower for 2.49 seconds before landing safely in a net. To test his initial theory that the brain's perception speeds up, he gave the participants an LED watch that alternated digits and their negatives (for example, the number 4 would be lit up in red with a black background, then the lights would switch so that the red background created a black 4).

The randomized digits and their negatives would flash quicker than the brain could perceive in a normal state of mind. Eagleman hoped that in his experiment, his participants would be able to read them.

That wasn't the case. When his participants were in their terrifying free-fall, the numbers on the watch weren't any clearer, which led Eagleman to believe that it was an effect of memory, not perception of time, that made time seem slower. Eagleman’s theory is that time seems slower because your brain is writing down more memory than it would in an everyday situation.

When our brains normally process our world, they automatically throw out relatively unimportant data, like the eye color of the person you’ve just met or a street sign you passed on the highway minutes ago. Things that are important are written in our brains and kept there for us to reflect on, but according to Eagleman, a life-threatening situation, such as an attempted robbery, makes our brains write down much more than it normally would. Eagleman believes that the amygdala is the part of the brain that allows this to happen.

The amygdala associates with emotional reactions and memory, and kicks into high gear in events like these and brings you into a higher state of awareness. The emotion Rivas was feeling was one of the reasons she can remember details like the look on Evans’ face, the thoughts racing through her head and the exact spot she was mopping the moment she heard the robber first walk in.

“The amygdala recruits other parts of the brain to lay down memories on a secondary memory track,” Eagleman said. In other words, the amygdala may be encoding these memories in more than one way.
Aaron Jasnow, assistant professor in Kent State's department of psychology, says that our brains contain neurotransmitters (which are like our brain's messengers that carry signals from one area to another) that release chemicals throughout the brain. These neurotransmitters, along with hormones, are released more during emotional situations.

"It seems to enhance processing of the events that are going on so that you would potentially remember those events more," Jasnow said.

This is true of both happy memories and frightening ones, according to Jasnow. The brain works the same way to remember both positive and negative situations.

Eagleman said that Rivas' experience could have been what's called a flashbulb memory. A flashbulb memory is a memory that's vivid and easy to recall, and it's usually created during an emotional event.

But although the flashbulb memory is clear, there could be a chance that what Rivas remembers is not completely accurate. Over time, memories can be altered, and many memories seem to be solidified a long while after the event happened.

There is the misconception out there that emotional memories are more reliable, but in fact, they're "every bit as subject to perceiving incorrectly," Eagleman said. Rivas said that some of the Terry's Dairy employees believed the handle of the robber's gun was white, but others were seeing a wooden handle.

There are many other ways that your brain process memory. These are just a couple of them.

But it's these emotional and stressful situations like robberies or free falling that actually give you a little glimpse of what your brain normally collects without your conscious attention, like a visit inside your mind's complex internal database.

The robbery doesn't keep Rivas up at night. She's moved on since then. So have her co-workers, she says. But recalling that time in her life, that moment of panic that left her locked in the bathroom was easy for her to do. She can explain the details as if they just happened yesterday. So whether it's the excitement of something like your first kiss or even the terror of being held at gunpoint, the emotion of the memory is what makes it stronger. Turns out, the moments that felt like a lifetime, may very well last a lifetime in your memory.
FAILURE to DIAGNOSE

One student tries to hold herself together as a parade of doctors and nurses struggle to diagnose her crippling weeks-long migraine.

BY RACHEL CAMPBELL

One hour passed, then a second and my worry increased. I feared the worst. Why was it taking so long? Did they find a tumor? Were they trying to figure out how to break the bad news? Was I going to die? These thoughts raced through my head as I stared at the TV and my mom read Walter Isaacson’s biography of Steve Jobs that I bought her for Christmas. It was more like she was staring at the pages, because they rarely seemed to turn.

All of this was triggered by the most intense headache I have ever experienced. I say headache, not headaches, because it wasn’t a light switch relationship, you know, a period of on-again off-again. It was more than a month of one constant headache. I was furniture shopping with my mom near the end of July 2012 when it hit like an internal ton of bricks to my frontal lobe. It felt like someone was stretching the skin of my forehead as tight as possible while pounding my temples and the front of my skull all at once.

Furniture shopping was followed by my mom choosing the loudest, most irritating restaurant for dinner, or at least it felt that way. The room was dark, having only one dim light suspended above each table, but I felt like I was staring into the sun for two hours. My mind latched onto every sound around me. That lady five tables away? Her laugh was shrieking;
it pierced my eardrums with every breath. The man behind us? His whole life story rang through my head. That fork the toddler dropped? It exploded like a bomb as it hit the ground.

I sat waiting for a verdict as to what might be causing my unbearable pain. My mom got up to use the restroom and I thought to myself, ‘This is when they’re going to call me back into that private waiting room. I’m going to have to face the bad news alone.’ And I was right, sort of. I was called up to the reception desk in the midst of Wheeling Hospital, but not for the bad news I expected. My pediatrician was unavailable yet again. They had been trying to reach her for the past two hours to review the MRI scans before I was either released or checked into the hospital if something was wrong. Because my pediatrician couldn’t be reached, they called another one who cleared me to go home for the time being because my scans appeared to be normal.

A conversation with my own pediatrician the morning after my MRI led to making an appointment with a notable neurologist. I say notable because this woman was so booked I couldn’t get in to see her until August 10, more than one week away.

The neurologist is an osteopath, which means she observes the body as a whole to determine the root of the problem rather than just examining the area of concern. I began with her in a gynecologist’s office in Wheeling Hospital. She held office hours there for women in a waiting room filled with baby photos and parenting magazines on the second Friday of every month.

I didn’t know why this was, but I didn’t care; I just wanted to know why my head was still throbbing. It was now day 16 of the never-ending headache.

After an hour or so, we were called back into an examination room. The “what’s wrong with me” spiel was given like it’d been rehearsed, while there was poking and prodding of my vitals. She asked what other doctors had been saying, and we went through everything including that I was told to stop caffeine consumption entirely. She nearly fell off of her stool when she heard this.

“Are your headaches better or worse since you stopped drinking caffeine?” she asked.

“They’re about the same if not a tad worse,” I said.

She laughed in an “I thought so” tone.

“Caffeine is a drug,” she said. “You need to wean yourself off of it. Going cold turkey is likely to cause headaches, and the fact that you already had them, and they made you do that is ridiculous.”

Bottom line: I was allowed to drink coffee again. For someone who drinks at least two cups per day, this was quite the relief, but still not the relief I was looking for.

One thing the neurologist did that the others didn’t was check my eyes. In addition to the head and neck pain, I had the inability to stop myself from blinking constantly. It was like there was dust in my eyes, and I couldn’t get it out. I told the doctor I believed it was my subconscious effort to relieve the tension above my sockets. If I blinked, it stopped hurting...even if it was only a respite, I needed it.

The neurologist pulled out that cone-shaped flashlight eye doctors use. She turned it on and I winced. She apologized, not in that doctor’s way where they just want you to stop moving so they can get it over with, but sincerely. She had that motherly aura, which made her likable. This was especially necessary in a time when I was doing my best to not outwardly freak out.

She did the examination in spurts, shining the light and then taking a break in order to do the best she could to not exacerbate the headache. She held her finger off to the side and told me to focus on it without moving my head, but I couldn’t. My eyes began rapidly shaking and it hurt to focus. She sighed so deeply in response I thought it was a subconscious accident. “I’m worried about your eyes,” she said. “The eyes make me think that it is something else entirely.”

And then she said it: the one thing I feared most. “It’s making me think it could be a pseudo tumor.” Tumor. It rang through my head and made my stomach hit the floor, and then I started crying. Not sob-crying, but the kind you don’t want anyone to see.

Pseudotumor cerebri. She explained that it was a “fake brain tumor” that is caused by high pressure in the skull, usually due to spinal fluid buildup. She believed that the pressure in my brain was causing my blinking and inability to focus my eyes. She also believed I needed a spinal tap, or lumbar puncture. My vision blurred and my nose ran as I tried my best not to make those choking on air noises, but it was useless. My mom grabbed my hand and the neurologist scooted closer. She looked me in the eyes, and told me that it would help. Even
if they did the lumbar puncture and discovered that the pressure was normal, the procedure relieves any slight pressure and would likely reduce the pain of the headaches.

I was sent to another wing of the hospital to yet another waiting room. After the initial sign-in, I was sent to a cubicle for more paperwork and insurance checks with a noisy printer that barely worked. A chipper old woman at the desk sent us to a different waiting room where we were then called into another cubicle behind the swinging hospital doors. After that, we were placed in yet another private waiting room with a static-filled TV.

I sent a text to my now boyfriend, back then not so much, that I’d be unreachable for a few hours. I had been nonexistent during the past few weeks, something I barely noticed but was still aware of. Out of spite, I sent something along the lines of ‘I’m going to be unavailable for the next few hours. I have to get a spinal tap to make sure I don’t have a tumor in case you cared.’ As soon as I hit send, I was called back into the hospital to do more paperwork (shocker). I regretted the text as soon as I sent it. I thought about it on the walk through the wing. It was petty and immature, but I was scared. I had been keeping a brave face for my mom, which was something I knew how to do well since my father passed nine years prior. I didn’t want to worry her, but I needed to tell someone.

When I was 11, I sat in the same waiting room I was currently awaiting treatment in. My dad lost his balance and hit the floor one morning before he was rushed into the ER. They discovered a blood clot between his heart and lungs that had to be broken up in order to save his life. Being a mere fifth grader, my mom didn’t allow me back in to the room to see my dad. My last image was him being rushed out of our home on a stretcher with an oxygen mask strapped to his face. My mom said it was better than seeing wires sticking out of him and doctors on top of him. Yes, on top of him. One small-statured doctor worked to break up the blood clot by straddling my father’s chest in one last, failed effort to save his life. That doctor was now standing in front of me, ready to do my lumbar puncture.

As I had learned from WebMD while awaiting my procedure, the purpose of a lumbar puncture is to collect the cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. It is obtained by inserting a needle
into the lower section of the spinal canal. The sample is then studied for color, blood cell counts, protein, glucose and other levels of things in a culture cup, and in my case, the pressure would also be measured.

My mom gasped when she realized who the radiologist was. He answered a few questions before grabbing a chair and leading her out into the hallway to wait for the procedure to be over. They kept talking outside while the technician sterilized my lower back. The radiologist reentered, closing the door behind him. He positioned me so that I could see the screen that showed the live X-ray of my spine. He explained the process once more before finally beginning.

The needle was inserted, and the release of the fluid sent an intense sensation up my back. It was like the syringe was filled with liquid fire. Numerous doses were added as I buried my head in the pillow, trying not to cry. The technician had offered me her hand before beginning the procedure, but I declined. She saw my reaction and rushed over taking my hand herself, and I let her. She talked to me, trying to make me laugh. It worked until the real needle was used. I could tell the difference based on the size. The first one was small, but the second felt like a stick being shoved through my back. I don’t know if it was actually that big; the only things I could see were the X-ray of my spine and the face of the technician. I also don’t know how much time passed, but it felt like years.

The procedure finished, and the radiologist sealed the spinal fluid for the lab to collect. I was rolled into the hallway on my stretcher with my mom’s chair at my feet. I was required to remain horizontal for an hour post-procedure to avoid any spinal headaches on top of my current one. I stared at the ceiling for the majority of the time as my mom continued pretending to read about Steve Jobs.

We finally exited the hospital after a good 8 hours of doctor-filled fun. I got outside and my phone buzzed numerous times: four texts, two missed calls and a voicemail.

The lumbar puncture caused so much pain I barely noticed that my headache started going away. My spine ached, and I feared bursting the insertion point and causing brain fluid to leak out. I literally walked around as if I was crippled for a solid two days, or rather one day, because the first day was spent solely in my bed.

I returned to the neurologist Aug. 13, three days after the lumbar puncture. She hugged me like she had done at our first appointment upon my departure, before launching into the breakdown of what it was. Medical terms are tricky, and when you’re left with several options, it’s hard to keep them straight. My headaches were more or less gone, a relief the neurologist attributed to the lumbar puncture and medication she prescribed me at our first appointment. Regardless, she feared that whatever it was could come back and she, unfortunately, announced that the possible pseudo tumor had competition. She pulled a business card from her stack and wrote on it “Possible herpes encephalitis vs. pseudo tumor July 2012” and told me to put it in my wallet. So it was now a fake brain tumor versus herpes, but not the type we all learned about in health class. Herpes viral encephalitis is an infection of the central nervous system.

I stuck the card behind my Blue Cross Blue Shield insurance card. If anything would occur and I would need rushed to a hospital, the card is there for easy reference of my past medical history.

The neurologist continued to look through my file, and revealed that there had not been enough fluid to do all the tests. She was highly disappointed that the one for West Nile Virus was skipped in favor of less important ones she had marked. West Nile Virus was the one my mom self-prescribed to me after several web searches and evidence of mosquito bites obtained on vacation the week before the headaches began. The neurologist contemplated sending me for another lumbar puncture, but I refused. As far as I was concerned, the headaches were gone, or at least lessened, and I was feeling better despite the continuing back pain from the lumbar puncture. There was no need to increase the pain for the sake of adding to what could possibly be wrong with me.

Without a definitive diagnosis, I could only direct my frustration at the team of medics who failed me. Seven days worth of appointments with 10 doctors’ opinions, an ensemble of nurses and a needle through my spine, and all I have to show for it is a pair of nerdy reading glasses my eye doctor suggested I buy in case of a future headache.

Mystery migraine: I; doctors: 0. B

"It was like the syringe was filled with liquid fire. Numerous doses were added as I buried my head in the pillow, trying not to cry."
THE LONG ROAD TO SELF-ACCEPTANCE

A Kent State graduate student shares her story of a life-long battle with anorexia nervosa — a struggle which has inspired her to help others overcome their body issues.

BY KATHERINE SCHAEFFER
Colleen Fitzgibbons was 11 years old when her mother discovered a stash of untouched lunches reeking from under her bed. Fitzgibbons had been hiding her school lunches so she didn’t have to eat them. She had also been skipping meals and restricting herself to only one item of food per day. Her mother took her to a doctor, and she was soon diagnosed with anorexia nervosa.

“I was hospitalized for a few days because I hadn’t eaten anything,” Fitzgibbons said. “For days on end, I stopped eating completely. I was so weak on the way to the hospital, I couldn’t even keep my head up.”

Fitzgibbons’ problem began at a very young age. As far back as she can remember, she loved hearing her grandmother praise her tiny frame, gushing over her petite build. Growing up, she put a tremendous amount of pressure on herself to stay thin, worrying that being overweight would make her unlovable. Her parents’ divorce only added to her confusion about weight and relationships. When Fitzgibbons was about 5 years old, she told her mother the reason her father no longer loved her mother was probably because she was “kind of fat.” In hindsight, Fitzgibbons realized her skewed view of her mother’s weight was an early indicator of her own anxieties.

While it may seem strange that Fitzgibbons was so worried about weight and appearance at a young age, a study funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute surveyed a sample of nine and 10 year olds about eating disorders; 40 percent reported that they have tried to lose weight.

Fitzgibbons, who is pursuing a master’s degree in public health, has made it her mission to help others struggling with body image. She founded the Body Acceptance Movement last fall. The group’s goal is not only to educate about the signs and dangers of eating disorders, but to celebrate physical differences and imperfections that are usually seen as flaws.

A survey conducted by the National Eating Disorders Association this February found that between 10 and 20 percent of college-age women and between four and 10 percent of college-age men struggle with eating disorders.

“As I got here I wanted to start an organization that had to do with body image and body acceptance,” Fitzgibbons said. “It stemmed from my eating disorder, but I feel as though everyone who’s joined and who’s contributed to the organization has their own personal story as to why they’re part of the movement.”

Maria Nicholas, a junior nursing major, joined because she believes body image is an overlooked issue among young adults.

“There are so many people struggling on any college campus, and it goes unnoticed,” Nicholas said. “I think that organizations like this will help people be more aware of the signs. And the Body Acceptance Movement isn’t only about eating disorders; but in terms of eating disorders, it’s helpful to give people an idea of what signs to look out for — what’s normal eating, what’s not normal eating.”

After Fitzgibbons was diagnosed with anorexia, she received counseling and visited her pediatrician for weigh-ins and weekly blood pressure examinations. With the support of friends and family, she slowly developed healthier eating habits. However, the compulsion to restrict her diet never disappeared. Fitzgibbons’ anorexia developed into orthorexia, a lesser-known eating disorder characterized by an unhealthy obsession with excessive exercise and avoiding foods deemed fattening.

“[Orthorexics] are the people who are overly obsessed with healthy eating and exercising,” Fitzgibbons said. “That’s more toward high school and college what I was focused on. It’s one thing to be healthy and eat right, but it’s another thing when it becomes an obsession.”

Fitzgibbons said while she avoided chocolate for years because she believed it was “bad food,” she feels more in control of her illness than ever before. In addition to the Body Acceptance Movement, she began training as a marathon runner, which helps her stay healthy.

“I run marathons, and it’s my motivation to keep from relapse,” Fitzgibbons said. “I have to nourish my body in order to compete.”

After years of shying away from sweets, Fitzgibbons is finally comfortable with indulging in moderation. In fact, she treats herself to a slice of cake after every race.

“"It’s one thing to be healthy and eat right, but it’s another thing when it becomes an obsession."”

- Colleen Fitzgibbons
Volunteer Pete Lilo takes down feed containers in the horse barn on Jan. 27, 2013.
Farm animals live much of their short lives in fear. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 10.2 billion animals were raised and killed for food in 2010. Of those, 875 million died from disease, injury, starvation or suffocation.

Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, located on the outskirts of Kent, cooperates with humane societies and law enforcement officers to rescue, rehabilitate and adopt-out abused, abandoned and neglected farm animals. Once rescued by Happy Trails, animals will not be bred, exploited or placed back into food production.

Few realize just how much goes into taking care of an abused animal — how much time, money and love is required to repair a shattered psyche and crippled body. The all-volunteer workforce at Happy Trails makes the place function, and that means feeding the plethora of horses, pigs, chickens and goats. Day and night. Rain or shine.

“The animals don’t feed themselves. They don’t get a day off, and neither do we,” volunteer Angela Rahn said while feeding the horses at 7 a.m., with the temperature well below 20 degrees.

The following photos capture several days at Happy Trails in late January 2013.
Above: Farm pigs like Willow and Cal can weigh up to 800 pounds and have been known to jump their fences. Volunteer Angela Rahn, who often tends to the pigs, said that while the animals are often written off, they are actually smarter and easier to train and handle than dogs. Rahn lives in Cleveland but commutes to Happy Trails because she loves the work. She and her family are considering moving closer to the farm.

Right: Due to his abusive past, Francis the goose is particularly hostile, especially toward males. However, he has come to enjoy the company of volunteer Illona Urban. She has found that if lifted and hugged, Francis will refrain from biting. "If I could adopt this guy I would," Urban said as she held Francis on a chilly afternoon.
Below: Suvali the pony is one of the few animals allowed to roam freely throughout the farm. Given her size, the volunteers do not expect her to be adopted. She remains a favorite, rarely causing trouble or making noise.
Above: Natasha the goat was found on the side of the road 24 hours after she was born, with her umbilical cord still attached. Happy Trails volunteers worked quickly to save her life, and she has since been nursed back to health.

Left: Volunteer Pete Lilo, a retired truck driver, lives on the farm 24/7, making him the only volunteer that is on the job for every hour of every day. He spends most of his time feeding the animals and cleaning the facilities, as well as instructing other volunteers.
Sophie the horse, shown with volunteer Angela Rahn, was bought at an auction, severely injured and missing her right eye. Since Sophie’s arrival at Happy Trails, her health has dramatically improved.
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May 2013
Nadia Asif may be prescribing medicine before she can buy her first beer. She skipped two grades in secondary school, seventh and twelfth. She never went to homecoming or prom, or even drove herself to school, and she graduated at 16. At 17, the integrated life sciences major is one credit hour away from senior status at Kent State.

Last year, Asif moved from Connecticut to Ohio after being selected for the bachelor of science/doctor of medicine degree program, a six-year plan in which students earn a bachelor of science from a participating public university, followed by a doctor of medicine from Northeast Ohio Medical University. Only 35 students are selected for the program each year, 90 percent of which are in-state.

Asif’s long-term goal: joining Doctors Without Borders.
I think that I’m the person that helps people out. Not in the motherly sense, but I do help people, especially with their academic stuff.

I get called “the baby” sometimes. [My friends] aren’t really making fun of me; it’s just that I’m the youngest. I think they used to think that they had to take care of me, but now I feel like they think I can do it on my own. I’m one of the only people living in an apartment and 90 percent of them are still living in the dorms.

I measure my life by obsessions. Right now it’s zombies, especially “The Walking Dead.” I play the video game, I read the comics, I might pick up the TV show sometimes, but people say it’s not as good as the comic book or the game. It’s just really interesting to me. Especially the video game.

I saw the trailer for “Warm Bodies.” It didn’t look that much like zombie horror. It’s like ‘Twilight’ all over again.

If I’m in my apartment, I’m probably sleeping. I mean, let’s be honest. If I’m not tired, though, I’ll just hang around campus. I used to go to the Rec [Center] a lot more. Right now, if I come back to my apartment I’ll read some more of my books, or take a nap, or talk to my roommate or something. Sometimes we attempt to cook together. That’s always fun.

I moved around a lot when I was a kid. I feel like my childhood ended when I moved to Connecticut in 2007 — so I was in fifth grade, almost sixth grade. I was already starting to think about college, making good grades and wanting to achieve things.

It was really hard to keep friends. When I was in elementary school, I had a best friend. After I moved to Connecticut, we didn’t talk a whole lot. I remember the day I left, her mom told her that we weren’t going to be as close of friends anymore. And I kind of didn’t believe it. But now I do see the wisdom in that. It is true. Thinking about that is kind of sad, but along the way I was making new friends. People come and go in your life. I kind of just got used to that.

I’ve thought about like, “What if I’m a doctor before I can legally drink?” It kind of makes me worried that patients may not take me seriously because I look so young — and I am young. But I’ll be a doctor.

To the ones who want kids to [go about education] the traditional way: I think that for some people they really need to do that, go through four years of high school and four years of college. It just depends on who you are. Even the people that say you should get through it all as fast as you can are wrong too, sometimes. It really depends on each individual case. I think in my case I’m able to do it and I’m being pretty successful right now, and I’m happy about what I did.

I’m reading a book right now. It’s called “The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down.” It’s kind of required reading, but I’m reading ahead. It’s about this girl who has epilepsy. Her parents don’t speak English and when they move to America and have to talk to doctors they can’t really communicate. The doctors tell her what medicine to take, but it’s against their belief system. Medicine is really a cultural and religious thing as well for a lot of people.

I knew I wanted to be a doctor when I was really young. My grandpa was in the hospital then, and I just saw all the doctors and nurses doing everything they could to help. My grandpa didn’t make it, but I knew they tried really hard. That’s when I knew I wanted to be a doctor because I saw how much they cared. I want to be able to save someone one day.
SOLDIERING

Four Kent State veterans talk to The Burr about the challenges of adjusting to civilian life after military service. Never completely shedding their uniforms, these students are in an ongoing battle with their new roles.

BY MEGAN WILKINSON AND ALEXIS PFEIFER

Coty Giannelli
Military police officer, National Guard
Senior photojournalism major

At 17, Coty Giannelli joined the National Guard. The recent high school graduate was in the country for a month of basic training before becoming a military police officer for a law-and-order mission in Germany. Giannelli later served in Iraq, checking identification, serving on guard duty, maintaining equipment and patrolling through Iraqi neighborhoods with officers.

The change in Giannelli's lifestyle was the hardest part of transitioning to life in academia.

“In the military, I was getting a paycheck,” he said. “I had something to do. I had a job, or I was working out with friends. I was always around people. When I got back, I moved to Kent and had no friends. I was pretty much by myself.”

Giannelli dealt with a combination of physical and mental stressors while adapting to life at Kent State. He struggled with sleep issues and nerve damage in his back, which he sustained from his time in the Middle East.

“Being on active duty military, there’s a lot of structure,” Giannelli said. “There’s always someone to tell you what to do and how to do it. In the civilian world, you’re your own boss. If I didn’t want to go to class, I didn’t go to class.”

Fortunately, Giannelli said, he found a niche group in the Kent State Veterans Club, who helped him move forward. He also developed a passion for photography, both as a potential career and a hobby that helped get him out of the house

“You’ll never be that person you were before those experiences,” Giannelli said. “I’m still readjusting now. As you start getting connected, life will transition to almost normal.”

Angie Miller
Nuclear mechanic, Navy
Senior psychology major

Six hours on; six hours off. Six hours on; six hours off.

This was Angie Miller’s schedule as a nuclear mechanic in the U.S. Navy during the late 1990s and early 2000s. She was responsible for helping to run her ship’s power plant. Miller described the work as a lot of maintenance and machinery operating.

“It was a highly male field,” she said, “so it was rough, being a gal. I don’t think it’s too much different today.”

After seven months, Miller was pulled off of the ship to have her knees evaluated. She was not deemed fit for full-duty deployment and was stationed in the Washington D.C. area to work shore duty. At the time, she was close to having a baby, so being away from the nuclear field was good for her condition.

Her husband was also serving in the military at that time, so Miller decided to end her naval career in 2002 to raise her child.

When her husband finished his duty, he went to college to become an engineer for General Motors in Lordstown, Ohio. Miller, who had a few college credits from before her military career, knew this was her opportunity to get a degree. Psychology interested her, so she applied to Kent State and began classes.

At Kent State, the university’s veterans club helped Miller readjust to college life.

“It really does become an extended family,” she said. “We bicker about
branches and give each other a hard time, but we tend to stick up for each other. They become our brothers and sisters, in some aspects. A lot of us have kids and we’re all aunts and uncles to each other’s kids.”

**Cat Hofer**

Various, National Guard
Senior pre-nursing major

Cat Hofer served in the National Guard in Afghanistan. While there, she promised her sons she would take them to Washington D.C. before serving a second deployment in the spring.

“I wanted to make that promise happen before I leave so there’s nothing left unsaid or undone when I leave,” Hofer said.

She took that vacation with her boys in early February.

Hofer served from May 2005 to 2008, jumping from human resources to security to maintenance posts. She said she plans on returning this year, hoping to serve in combat.

“I’m what they call a lifer,” she said. “The army has turned into my family, and they push me when I need pushing. They’re my rock. My kids and my family are what keep me publishing. They’re my rock. My kids and my family are what keep me publishing.”

Since 2008, Hofer temporarily traded military life for college life. She started in a nursing program at Walsh University and took classes at Aultman Hospital in Canton, Ohio, ultimately transferred to Kent State for pre-nursing in late 2009. Hofer said she was intimidated by large classes filled with 18 to 19-year-old students who had barely “experienced life.” She said she was close to dropping out until she found the Kent State Veterans Club.

“I had a blast,” she said. “It was laughing, joking and like being in the army all over again. It was like I found my niche and where I belong at Kent State.”

Hofer was recently accepted into Kent State’s nursing program and plans to take classes when she returns from Afghanistan.

“I think it’s going to be a million times harder coming home again and trying to re-establish myself at college in the nursing program,” Hofer said. “It’s not the rigorous part that gets to me — we have to do things under stress [at war] — it’s the people around me that get in the way of everything I’m trying to do. My biggest fear is when I come home.”

**Nathan Lehota**

Mechanic, Navy
Senior electronic media production and broadcast journalism double major

Nathan Lehota joined the Navy immediately after high school with some of his closest friends.

After nearly a year of training, Lehota went on his first deployment for five years on a destroyer ship in the Indian Ocean. His main job was to repair and maintain equipment and electronics.

“To call [the military] a job would not give it credit,” Lehota said. “When you’re in the military, it’s a lifestyle. Even after, I consider being in the military almost a different culture. You have your own language and connection with your people. It’s not just the amount we curse — there’s that, obviously — and we have our own struggles, dealing with our ghosts from the past.”

While at sea in 2006, Lehota had his first encounter with Somali pirates, a continuing problem for the U.S. Navy.

“They thought we were a cruise ship,” Lehota said. “And it was just breaking dawn. There were three boats, to keep it simple. Small boats. One of them engaged us; two engaged Cape St. George. And what we did is we deployed our [visiting board search seizure] team.”

Although it was only a small battle, Lehota watched five pirates burn on the ship across from them.

After two deployments, Lehota decided the military life wasn’t something he wanted to return to. He said that loneliness affected him the most, as parents, siblings and extended family members would greet returning veterans on the pier. Lehota didn’t have anyone waiting for him.

“I was that sad sap at the end of the pier, waiting for a taxi,” Lehota said. “It was a very lonely time.”

When Lehota left the Navy, he registered as an electronic media production and broadcast journalism double major at Kent State. His adjustment to college life went smoother than most, as he immediately got involved in the Kent State Veterans Club and Black Squirrel Radio, hosting his own show.

Lehota said he isn’t the same person he was before the military.

“Transition does change you, whether you got someone here or not,” he said. “It was a good thing I wasn’t married — transitioning ends up breaking a lot of marriages — but I just had to get with the flow.”

“The army has turned into my family, and they push me when I need pushing. They’re my rock.”

- Cat Hofer
FINDING THOMAS MOSS

From reading Malcolm X in Catholic boarding school to washing tear gas out of her eyes on May 4, 1970, professor Christina McVay opens up about her 13-year obsession and what it means to do what you love.

BY: CAITLIN RESTELLI
One afternoon in 1984, Christina McVay received her paycheck from work and headed to Hard Times, a bar that once occupied Laundry 101 in the Acme Plaza. She didn’t go to the bar to drink often — she usually opted to save money and drink at home. When she would go, it was to see her brother Tom who tended there. He offered a cheap brew. “It’s payday,” she said and ordered a pricier alternative — most likely a Rolling Rock. The man next to her knew she must be an employee at Kent State because he, too, got paid. He asked McVay which department she worked in, and she told him English. Small world — so did he.

She responded, “No, you’re not. I’m in the English department. I’ve never seen a black person in the English department.” He laughed and then explained.

His name was Wiley Smith, and he worked in the Pan-African Studies department. Taking a stab at it, he invited her to the department, thinking she would enjoy teaching in it. Smith became McVay’s mentor with black literature and culture and teaching Pan-African Studies.

Twenty-nine years later, McVay has her dear friend’s job as head of the literature and writing classes in Pan-African Studies, while still teaching English. Smith has since passed, but McVay very much respected him and enjoyed his wonderful sense of humor.

It’s a couple days before the start of the spring 2013 semester. Papers are strewn over the L-shaped desk tucked in the corner of McVay’s office where she sits typing away on her MacBook. An upside-down map hangs on one wall, and a dreamcatcher rests on a bookshelf. Word spread that retirement may be in the works for her, but she laughed when asked about it, saying she never thought she would come to love teaching so much.

The funny thing is, she never imagined she would be teaching, let alone teaching Pan-African Studies. She changed her major about five times. However, teaching brings a smile to her face when talking about it.

“I enjoy hanging out with young people, and it’s just really wonderful when students, you know, when that light bulb goes off, and you can see it.”

McVay, now 61 years old, came to Kent State in 1969 as a freshman. She graduated with a double major in German and Russian in 1974, went to The Ohio State University for her master’s degree in German and then spent some time in Germany.

In 1981, she came back to Kent State as an English graduate student, got another master’s degree in comparative literature. She started toward a Ph.D., which she did not finish after starting Pan-African Studies in 1984.

McVay’s interest in black history did not start when she first walked into the Pan-African Studies department after meeting Smith.

Growing up, McVay and her family watched the news every night before dinner and then would discuss it over their meal.

“I was always, always interested in race in America,” McVay said. “When I was in high school, my parents sent me to a Catholic girl’s boarding school in Pennsylvania because they thought I needed the discipline. I’m not Catholic. I hated it there.”

Since she watched the news growing up, she knew what was happening in America while she was away. It was at the boarding school where she started to see the black perspective.

In her second year there, she and Alice, one of the few black girls at the school, became best friends over their shared hatred for Catholic school. Alice’s brother and sister attended a black school in Nashville and sent Alice books by Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver.

“So here’s Alice and me at this convent school reading radical black literature,” she said with a laugh.

“Listen, I feel really lucky I was born when I was ‘cause it was a really, really interesting time,” McVay said. “There was so much going on in the world, and of course a lot of it was not happy stuff; but we really, as young people, we really felt empowered to make change.”

In 2000, McVay had a student named Chandra Phillips who was a teleproductions major. One day, Phillips asked McVay to advise her on her senior honors project. She wanted to create a 30-minute documentary on the beginnings of Ida B. Wells’ anti-lynching campaign. Wells was a black journalist in Memphis, Tenn., in 1892 and was well-known for the campaign.

McVay knew Phillips didn’t ask her to advise on her project because she was good at making documentaries.

“There was so much going on in the world, and of course a lot of it was not happy stuff; but we really, as young people, we really felt empowered to make change.”

- Christina McVay
Zion Cemetery, located in Memphis, Tenn., is the resting place of Thomas Moss, a lynching victim. Before McVay’s restoration project, the majority of the graves were unidentifiable.

She asked her because she knew a lot about black history — and she loved going on road trips.

So McVay, Phillips and Phillips’ boyfriend set out for Memphis to interview people and capture the history of the city behind the camera lens. There was one place in particular where Phillips wanted to shoot video, which was an all-black cemetery called Zion Cemetery. Buried there were three black lynch victims of 1892: Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell and William Stewart.

The cemetery, which was established in 1876 — Memphis’ oldest African American cemetery — rests about five miles south of downtown Memphis. They searched high and low, but not even GoogleMaps could have helped them. Finally there stood something like a cemetery, but it could have been mistaken as a lazy individual’s piece of property. Weeds and overgrown trees engulfed the nearly 16-acre land, and not one headstone of about 30,000 people buried there could be seen.

They made their way through this “cemetery,” but could not find the three lynched victims’ graves. Here McVay thought it would be a beautiful cemetery, maybe it even had a monument dedicated to the lynched victims. Instead, she stood on a piece of earth that had not been maintained for a long time.

The trio returned to Kent, and McVay returned with the thought of this cemetery nagging her.

“I’m really only kind of joking when I frequently tell people...I think the spirits of the people buried there recognized a real chump when they saw me because they would not get off my back until I got something going.”

Lo and behold, McVay made her way back to Memphis. She gave the finished project to the people Phillips interviewed. One of the women put McVay in contact with some people who had family buried in the cemetery.

“They’ve been trying to light a fire and get the cemetery cleaned up,” McVay said. “So, after doing a lot of phone calls and emails, it was spring break of 2002 that I started taking students down there.”

Last spring break, Sarah Kitson and Benjamin Moten were two of 25 students who traveled to Memphis. Kitson, senior biology major, and Moten, now a Kent State alumnus, learned about the cemetery project during their freshman years. Kitson started going her sophomore year, went again her junior year and hopes to go again this year. Moten didn’t make it to Memphis until his senior year.

He ran into McVay, and she told him she still hadn’t seen him in her class. He was actually in need of a general elective, and he knew he wasn’t going to...
be visiting family during spring break.

"Honestly, I'm glad I went," Moten said. "It took four years of her telling me that I needed to go, to go, but... the experience was worth it, and it didn't really cost me [any money]. So, I'm actually glad that she kept putting the thought in my head."

The trip is as cheap as possible for students. They bring sleeping bags and pillows to sleep in a church, and the only things they have to pay for are food and activities. McVay has gone to the administrative offices begging for money. The Honors College and Department of Pan-African Studies usually split the cost of renting a 15-passenger van, and the Dean's Office of Arts and Sciences has also contributed money. Sometimes, McVay will even cover expenses and deduct it from her taxes.

While the students sleep in the church, McVay finds herself not able to sleep well on the floor, so she makes the 12-hour drive down in her little RV.

"It is kind of interesting," she said. "You throw these students into close quarters for a week and watch them sometimes battle but eventually work things out."

In the class, McVay shows photos of the cemetery and teaches the history of it. Moten said it motivated his class to work hard and collaborate to bring the cemetery back to life. However, "seeing the photos and hearing about it doesn't compare to actually seeing it," Moten said.

Kitson had the same outlook on the progress of the cemetery.

"At first, it's kind of shocking I guess, cause they've done a lot of work on it, so looking at pictures of when they first found it, it's obviously a whole lot better," Kitson said.

While there is a class for the trip, McVay still takes students who are not enrolled in it.

This was the route Kitson took. Even though she was not in the class, she was just as motivated to take on the project as the others. Some students have connections to the cemetery, and even though Kitson does not, she still finds herself frustrated that a city could allow a cemetery — a place of rest — to fall to such extremes and become forgotten.

"I really didn't think that I would see this cemetery cleaned up in my lifetime," McVay said. "Now I'm thinking maybe it is a possibility."

The transformation from the cemetery in 2000 to what it is today is obvious. The entry gate, which was cleaned and painted by a Boy Scout troop, stands proudly in front of the cemetery. The city has become very involved as well. Boy Scout troops and high schools come to help and there is now a cemetery board that meets often and collaborates to get corporate money. McVay is not officially on the board, but they keep her in the loop.

Not only does McVay travel to Memphis in the spring, but she also takes a smaller group, maybe four or five students with her, in November for the annual cemetery fundraiser dinner.

"It's been pretty slow work, especially the first few years. But we're making a lot of progress," McVay said.

It was the spring of 2004, and a group of Kent State students were exploring parts of the cemetery that had not been cleaned up yet. Machetes cut through the fallen trees and weeds that had made the cemetery its home. One of the boys noticed a stone. Not a headstone, but a little rock that stood out. After getting a closer look, he saw the name, Thomas Moss, with the date of death. It was one of the three lynched victims.

"We found Thomas Moss!" the students yelled, as they were running back to the main group of people. "We found Thomas Moss!"

Unfortunately, McVay had to leave early that day and missed the students running out of the woods, but from what she was told it was a really emotional moment.

The other two lynched victims' graves have not been found, but McVay and the others still search for it. Kitson said the past two times she has gone, everyone says this trip will be the year they find the other lynch victims.

In a frame hanging on the wall next to the entrance of McVay's office is a photo of students paying respect at Thomas Moss's grave. It faces her desk where she diligently works. It's on the wall for her to see as she leaves her office every day, and it hangs there for her to see how far along the cemetery has come since the first day she and Phillips set foot on the outskirts of it.

Within a picture frame holds the story of McVay's hard work, perseverance and dedication, along with her proudest life accomplishment.

At McVay's age, she still loves what she does for a living, and that's not something many people can say.

"I still get out of bed looking forward to the classes I'm going to teach. I feel like I belong to a really exclusive club," she said with a laugh.

McVay has no plans of ending Kent's involvement in the Zion Cemetery project. Sometimes she wishes the cemetery she found was closer to Kent, but distance won't stop her from making her way down to Memphis. She began making change when she started reading radical black literature in high school and she continues to make changes more than 700 miles away from Kent.

"The cemetery restoration is one of the things I am really, really proud of in my life," McVay said. "Getting this effort up and going just through sheer persistence and full-heartiness."
It was the end of McVay's freshman year, and she had just turned 19. After being in boarding school in the middle of the woods in Pennsylvania, the last thing she ever thought would happen to her was being shot at. The National Guard began throwing tear gas into the crowd. McVay couldn't believe the boldness of some students who ran to grab the canisters and throw them back at the guards.

"Now I want you to know, I was not a brave soul. When they started throwing tear gas canisters, I tried to get out of there — at least where the tear gas was."

Before she could get away, her eyes filled with tear gas, and she couldn't see. Someone pulled her into Prentice Hall into a restroom where she rinsed her eyes out. Now that she could see, she walked out the front door of Prentice and looked to her right. The guardsmen were over in the practice football field on the other side of the parking lot. It looked like nothing was going on, so she started walking across the lot to where a few of her friends were standing. The guardsmen started walking down the hill to the other side of Taylor Hall.

"OK, this little confrontation is over," she thought. As she continued to walk toward her friends, the guardsmen began shooting. "Even though they had been on campus since Saturday. They had guns, and it never occurred to me that they were going to have bullets."

Car windows shattered around her, bullets fell on the ground and dust began to rise. Everyone scrambled for cover, and McVay stood there out in the open.

"What are they doing?" McVay thought to herself. "Get down!" a boy yelled to her. "They're shooting!"

She thought to herself, "no they're not," but she ducked under the car where the boy was hiding. That's when fear set in that they were going to march up the hill and shoot them all, but then the shooting stopped.

Allison Krause was lying in her boyfriend's arms, eyes open trying to talk. Blood was spilling out of her sides. McVay's mother always told her, if there is ever an accident or something serious and she can't help, then get out of the way. And that's what she did. As she walked toward Taylor Hall, she saw Jeff Miller lying on the pavement. Someone had turned his body over and blood was flowing down the pavement like a stream. "That's when it became real clear, 'Oh my God. People are dead.' And I think I went into shock."

She sat down on the curb outside Taylor as ambulances came and went. The rest is still fuzzy to McVay.

She went to the first anniversary event and then didn't go again until 1988. Her son went to Theodore Roosevelt High School in Kent, and his class took a field trip to the May 4 commemoration. She thought he might have questions about the speakers, so she decided to go, too. She didn't sit near him but close enough where she could see him. It was a gorgeous day like the day in 1970. She watched her son not pay attention to the speakers and flirt with the college girls. Then, the thought crossed her mind.

"It is really too bad Allison Krause can't be here watching her 16-year-old son flirt with college girls."

As soon as the thought left her mind she began crying and didn't stop. This was the first time in 18 years she cried over the events and "that's when I realized I had been really pissed off about this, and I didn't even know it."
Universal Lessons from Literature
(Contemporary and Classic)

BY CHRISTINA BUCCIERE

The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake
AUTHOR: AIMEE BENDER

On her ninth birthday, Rose Edelstein’s “gift” is brought to life — a catalyst for the arduous year to come. Upon biting into a piece of her mother’s lemon cake, she tastes a multitude of human emotions buried beneath the flour, butter and sugar, specifically her mother’s loneliness. She attempts to push the experience from her mind, but day after day her new ability persists. She unwillingly uncovers secrets about others, many of which she would rather have been left in the dark about.

Lesson learned: In this coming-of-age story, the reader is taken on Rose’s journey as she fights to escape her family’s depressive nature. Although it is difficult, she muddles through and eventually learns to cope. Rose shows us that while the path is thorny, the human spirit can overcome great obstacles when called upon to do so. Just like the feelings Rose tastes hidden within the flavors of food, the will to fight is often buried beneath the layers of fear, waiting for her command.

The Snow Child
AUTHOR: EOWYN IVEY

In the formidable Alaskan countryside, Jack and Mabel seek refuge after losing their only child at birth. With little income and overpowering isolation, they begin to drift apart, and the peace they sought remains an enigma. Then one day, Mabel feels an unusual surge of playfulness as the first snowfall of winter covers the fields. She and Jack play like children, building a snowman — or rather a snow girl. Just like a fairy tale from Mabel’s youth, the snow girl, called Faina, comes to life and brings happiness to the lonely couple. Mabel loves Faina deeply and tries to make her stay. But she soon learns she cannot control Faina, just like she could not control life and death.

Lesson learned: Mabel comes to understand the nature of life. Much like the Alaskan wilderness, life is unpredictable and sometimes harsh; however, it can also be nurturing and even magical. Mabel teaches us to take the good with the bad — the joy with the sorrow — because dwelling on hardships leaves no room for happiness.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time
AUTHOR: MARK HADDON

Fifteen-year-old Christopher Boone has Asperger’s Syndrome, a form of autism. Through the character’s quest to determine who killed his neighbor’s dog, Haddon takes readers into the mind of someone who struggles socially yet offers brilliant musings about everyday life. Because Christopher appears to be a normal teenager, people are surprised and often cruel when they experience his social inconsistencies. Christopher’s recurring dream in which he imagines a world only inhabited by people with Asperger’s Syndrome illustrates his yearning to be free of the social norms he doesn’t understand.

Lesson learned: Christopher longs for understanding. Although his life is difficult, he faces each day with determination. He asks readers to be gentle; he asks readers to be patient. Most of all, he asks readers to be kind because without a little investigating it’s impossible to know what could be hidden underneath.

The Lord of the Rings
AUTHOR: J. R. R. TOLKIEN

What a gift this series is to the fantasy lover — magic, swords, grotesque beasts and conquering heroes — but I would argue it reaches beyond its genre if given a chance. In Tolkien’s Middle Earth, unrest settles when the evil Sauron discovers his all-powerful ring has been found (by a hobbit no less — a race of small humanoids not typically known for courage). The Fellowship of the Ring is formed when four hobbits, two men, an elf, a dwarf and a wizard set off on a mission to Mount Doom to cast the ring into the lava from which it was forged.

Lesson learned: Take Frodo, the ring-bearer. Despite his small stature and limited worldview, he carries out the greatest challenge to ever face Middle Earth through strength of spirit and determination. He proves just how much one can overcome with the right frame of mind, no matter their limitations. Tolkien shows readers that the power of one’s character and zeal determines their success.
**Frankenstein**  
**AUTHOR:** MARY SHELLEY

Dr. Frankenstein, a natural science fanatic, becomes obsessed with discovering the secret of life. Believing he is armed with this knowledge, he fashions a body out of discarded human body parts. The creature comes to life, but upon seeing his creation, Frankenstein becomes sick with disgust. The monster, lonely and unaccepted for his appearance, seeks revenge as a means of healing his wounds.

**Lesson learned:** "Frankenstein" paints a haunting picture of a creature so forlorn in a world of rejection that it seeks revenge to fill the void. Much like those dealing with depression or a disability, desperate for a sense of control over their lives, the monster’s self-destructive nature serves as a warning against letting darkness win — because in the end, the monster is still left to face its remorse.

**Heart of Darkness**  
**AUTHOR:** JOSEPH CONRAD

This sinister story of Marlow’s journey up the Congo River to meet the mysterious Kurtz takes him through a menacing and majestic jungle. When he finally arrives at Kurtz’s camp, things are not as he expected. Kurtz has gone mad and has likened himself to a god, whose imperialistic mission is to control and civilize the natives. The Africans are treated like objects, and the power over these people gives the colonial bureaucracy a false sense of godliness. As Conrad submerges the reader into this world of hypocrisy and moral trauma, it certainly speaks volumes to the inner moral compass.

**Lesson learned:** In this piece, Conrad alludes to man’s inherent “heart of darkness,” or the pull toward evil we all face. He shows the reader what man is capable of, as well as what sort of destruction he can cause if let out of control. Conrad urges the reader to make choices based on presence of mind and positive morals, so as not to get caught in the unrelenting web of negative consequences.

**The Handmaid’s Tale**  
**AUTHOR:** MARGARET ATWOOD

This dystopian novel takes place in the fictional Republic of Gilead, a totalitarian state that has taken over what was once the United States. Chemicals led to declining fertility rates, so the Handmaids were created for elite couples who could not conceive on their own. Offred (literally “of Fred” — or belonging to Fred) describes her life in this oppressive society where women’s rights have been completely shattered. Women are treated as political property, seen as nothing more than vessels for the government’s disposal.

**Lesson learned:** Atwood offers powerful warnings against the nature of complacency. Most women in Gilead accept their fate and choose to become a part of the machine, but Offred musters the will to fight back, even when faced with seemingly impossible situations. This message specifically calls on women to question equality in workplaces and social arena — because if women aren’t willing to effect change, who will?

**The Kitchen House**  
**AUTHOR:** KATHLEEN GRISsom

It’s 1791 in the southern United States, and a clear line is drawn between whites and blacks. So where does that leave Lavinia, a young white orphan taken in as an indentured servant to work on the Pyke plantation? She grows up in the care of the slaves in the kitchen house, and an indestructible bond grows between them. But Lavinia cannot see her world becoming divided, as she continues to see her family as her equals. When her roles as mistress of the house and the faithful child become inextricably intertwined, it causes a storm of consequences. But in the face of tumult, Lavinia pushes back to fight for the ones she loves.

**Lesson learned:** Through her innocence and disregard for the social norms of the time, Grissom poses the question: What is more important than being loyal to those who have loved and nourished you — the people to whom you owe your character? Remembering where we come from keeps us firmly grounded. Lavinia and her family do not share the same blood or race, but their bond shows readers that family has no true definition.
WANT HALF OFF DEALS IN KENT?

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Studying abroad offers new opportunities and excitement for students across the globe. One feeling not advertised in brochures is homesickness. Ang Li, a graduate student from China, is one international student facing this reality.

If international travel is thought of in terms of matchmaking, Ang Li has tested the waters with many other suitors. Italy, Switzerland, France and Singapore all enjoyed flirtations. But, for the next several years, Li will study hospitality and tourism as a graduate student in the United States.

With her trip to the United States, two cultures became a one — the binding of “us” and “them.” The American faction of the student body wed the unfamiliar. But here lies a great American misconception, as there is not one unified international student body; there is instead an international mosaic.

Last fall, Li joined this mosaic with a goal.

“I don’t feel my major is something where you can learn from a book,” she said. “You need to learn something like hands-on experience.”

Her ambition and international experience make for a good setup, but she does have to battle the newness.

Dr. David Di Maria, the associate director of the Office of Global Education, compared the relationship to what any newlywed can affirm is a “roller coaster.” It begins with what he calls the “honeymoon” phase.

“Everything’s new and everyone’s excited about it,” he said, describing the month of vacation-like glamour, which Li called “fresh” and “cheerful.”

“There were more black squirrels than people,” Li giggled. “I feel like I live in a zoo.”

Li arrived early with the other international students — fragments of the multicultural mosaic. For a week, they were elated, surrounded by others who were in a similar position. It was an odd sort of irony, but they were unified by their isolation.

Li enjoyed the first few weeks, but then American students returned to campus, syllabi were handed out, deadlines were set and stress began to mount.

Klaus Gommlich, the director of the English as a Second Language (ESL) Center, said “language is key.” He described ESL as a bridge program, a marriage counselor of sorts for a struggling pair.

“Mastering a language primarily means to learn how other people think,” Gommlich said. “You have to be willing to open yourself to otherness. We’re not only dealing with the person as a student; we are dealing with the person as a whole.”

Li spent years studying English, which made her language barrier more manageable than it is for some students. Although Li struggles less
than others, there are times she wishes she could just go home.

“Sometimes I just want to dig a hole and plant a subway,” Li said.

Like missing the smelly feet of a spouse miles away, Li thinks sentimentally about the gray skies that blanket Beijing.

“I really miss Beijing’s crowded people and our bad traffic jams — even our air pollution,” Li said. “That is my route. That is my home.”

Li said while she misses living in a city, American attitudes won her over like a husband doing dishes.

“Here, Americans are very friendly,” she began. “It is easy to know somebody for you, and I have many casual friends.”

However, with a frown, she revealed a shadow of her next thought.

“But, I don’t have many close friends.”

This is to be expected according to Di Maria, who said international students are often taken aback by the nature of American friendships. He explained that in other cultures, men and women are invested in their relationships with other people on an entirely different level.

“We’re [Americans] very much individuals and that can be seen as very selfish,” Di Maria said. “It’s all about me, me, me.”

In Di Maria’s experience, foreign students seem to feel honor-bound to help each other in the classroom in a way that may seem like cheating to an American student. They are willing to be late to an appointment in order to fully address anyone who wants to chat on the way to a professor’s office. Americans, he said, appear comparatively nonchalant.

“You see that in empty promises,” he said. “You say ‘Oh yeah, we’ll do this sometime!’ but it never happens.”

In this situation, Li occasionally feels lonely. Americans also miss out on an opportunity to become aware of international cultures beyond the dialects and faces.

This, according to Carrie Circosta, assistant director of alumni relations, is where organizations like the Kent State International Mentors (KSIM) program come into the “marriage” equation.

“It’s not just an Office of Global Education thing — to help international students,” Circosta said. “It should be a campus-wide thing. You have to be comfortable before you can do anything else.”

KSIM was founded in 2009 in Koonce Hall. The group has since become an active international organization that hosts biweekly meetings. Members hope to recruit many of the more than 2,000 international students on campus.

Li, who is not yet a member of the KSIM community, said she has found a similarly supportive group of friends through the nearby Grace Presbyterian church.

“I have spent four or five months already with them,” Li said. These relationships help Li to fade culture shock into background noise. Although she is still searching for close friendships like the ones she has back home, she believes this group is the most supportive so far.

“When you have a large group of individuals from other countries, you need to adjust to their needs,” Gommlich said. “We think adjustment happens by itself but it really doesn’t.”

Gommlich was divided on his opinion of the university’s success.

“You need some flexibility. You cannot treat the international students like an anonymous group,” Gommlich asserted, adding that the university did not do enough to integrate students into the academic life. Gommlich said she believes American students and professors should accept the international mosaic. Only then will there be a true connection between Americans and the mosaic.

Di Maria agreed that the university is not where it needs to be, however, in comparison to other schools, Kent State is very accommodating. The university makes an effort to help international students with landlord issues and financial road-bumps, in addition to cultural accommodations.

“I think we’ve done better than most,” he said. “At other universities, if you’re obligated to pray five times a day, you might have to find an empty corner in a library.”

International students have to adjust to life in a new country, learn a language and try to build connections. Mirroring these efforts, the university must respectfully fulfill the counterpart in a dance for two: leading its partner through one turn after another.

After a full semester at Kent State, Li seems well-adjusted and grateful for her American education, which she said the Chinese believe to be the best in the world. Li may experience homesickness now and then, but she enjoys being able to say, “I survived.”

I really miss Beijing’s crowded people and our bad traffic jams — even our air pollution. That is my route. That is my home.”

- Ang Li
KEEPING IT FRESH
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The Grand Old Lady
A Timeline of the Franklin Hotel

Nicknamed “The Grand Old Lady of Main Street,” a faded memory of the 1920s remains at the apex of East Main and Depeyster streets. A building that once served as a hotel to Kent’s elite fell into disrepair for the past 20 years. The Franklin Hotel, now renamed “Acorn Corner,” hopes to once again be a hot spot in downtown Kent.

BY MATT POLEN

1899
The Revere Hotel closes, leaving the city of Kent without a hotel. With a struggling economy, Kent is in need not only of a hotel, but of something that has the potential to become a local institution.

1919
The property is purchased by the Hotel Kent Company on May 19, after it raises $150,000.

1920
The hotel costs $250,000 to build. The hotel is named “Franklin,” after Franklin Mills — the name of Kent from 1805 to 1867. In October, hotel manager Henry G. Walter resigns for medical reasons and is replaced by William R. Zingler.

1922
Howard M. Bissell buys the hotel from auction for $70,000. Later that year, Martin L. Davey and members of the Kent Board of Trade form the Franklin Kent Company and purchase the hotel from Bissell.

1924
On April 28, Hotel manager C.P. Putchin dies when an elevator cab plummets three floors following a cable break.

1934
The Franklin Hotel is sold in a sheriff’s sale. With Florence B. Adams as president, Kent Hotel, Inc. takes ownership. The hotel is renamed “Hotel Kent” and sees a period of financial success. The hotel housed businesses such as the Automobile License Bureau and a tavern called The Deck.

Amelia Earhart visits the Hotel Kent while presenting “Flying for Fun” at Kent State.

Courtesy of the Family of Amelia Earhart and estate.
1962
Frank P. Ellis purchases the hotel, renaming it "Hotel Kent-Ellis."

Mid-1970s
Hotel Kent-Ellis is sold to Joseph Bujack. It suffers financial difficulties, partially due to the opening of University Inn in 1970. The hotel is condemned after a series of fires plagues the hotel.

1980
The top three floors of the building become vacant and are condemned by the city. The rest of the building follows suit shortly after.

1994
The hotel is sold to Greg Vilk after the state of the building deteriorates considerably.

April 24, 2013
Acorn Corner will have its grand opening. Burbick alludes to the possibility of opening a wine and jazz bar in the basement, something which would preserve the original atmosphere of the building.

2012
Ron Burbick and his company, Genghis Properties, in turn purchase the building from the city of Kent for roughly $400,000. Tenants will include Buffalo Wild Wings, Marathon Financial and the Kent Area Chamber of Commerce.

2011
According to Ron Burbick, the city of Kent purchases the Franklin Hotel for around $800,000 from Vilk.

Architects mapped wiring plans for the first floor of the building.
Kent has more than a dozen new dining options for off-campus eaters. But a thriving downtown makes for an overwhelming selection. Here is a preview of our complete guide to dining in Kent.
Ray's Place
135 Franklin Ave. • 330-673-2233
Monday to Saturday 11 a.m. to 2:30 a.m., Sunday noon to 12:30 a.m.

Most cities, especially college towns, have that one joint that epitomizes the local identity. Kent is no exception — but Ray's is. Try to tell somebody from Kent that you haven’t been to Ray’s Place, and the concept won’t be lost on you. Ray’s feels more like a hangout than a business, the kind of bar that unsurprisingly attracts a large crowd of regular customers. As far as food goes, the famous Mo-Fo Burger, in addition to being a gargantuan goliath of a sandwich, was even featured on the Food Network’s “Best Thing I Ever Ate.” If you’re over 21, there’s an extensive drink selection. Lots of bars make this claim, but Ray’s backs it up, boasting 64 taps in addition to a variety of bottled beers. If against all odds you’re a resident of Kent who hasn’t been to Ray’s, you owe it to yourself and your city to make at least one trip. You won’t be disappointed.

-MATT POLEN

Laziza
195 E. Erie St. • 330-677-7000
Monday to Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., Saturday 3 to 11 p.m. Closed Sunday.

Laziza is like an elegant version of Aladdin’s Eatery. When you first walk in, you’re immediately immersed in Mediterranean culture. A hookah, ceramic camels, gold vases and other cultural items are displayed in cubby holes in the wall, specifically sized for them, and are lit up like artifacts in a museum. The bright, bold orange and blue walls combined with light music of lyres and mandolins elevate your mood and make you want to try something cultured. Just upstairs in a balcony-like setting is the Cedar Room, that’s decorated in some deeper maroon colors for busier weekend dining. The menu includes traditional Mediterranean dishes like tabouli, fattoush, chicken and beef shawarma wraps and baba ghanoush, but also includes familiar American dishes like buffalo chicken wraps. Laziza is the perfect place to either grab a quick drink, if you’re over 21 years old, or take a date to indulge on unordinary cuisine.

-CASSIE NEIDEN
The vibrant colors throughout the restaurant reflect the flavorful dishes and the attentive staff. Inside the restaurant, there is an entertaining view of the old and new developments downtown as you are at the mecca of the city's hustle and bustle. After placing your order, a complimentary salsa bar awaits you, equipped with four different kinds of salsa and various fresh ingredients. The strawberry salsa is rather decadent and worth a try. If the four salsas weren't enough, Fresco possesses more than 60 hot sauces with wacky names ranging from “Camel Toe” to “Weapons of Ass Destruction” and a bunch of ridiculous flavors in-between. For those of legal age, Fresco offers multiple domestic and imported beers, select wines, frozen sangrias and frozen margaritas. The key lime pie is phenomenally fresh. All in all, Fresco is the new standard of Mexican cuisine. - ARIELLE CAMPANALIE

Wire branches sprouting from a fireplace, tree trunks as end tables and a maple latte await you at Tree City Coffee & Pastry. The business spread its roots to Kent in January 2012. Jason Turnidge, former Kent Stater architecture professor, helped create a modern, nature-themed coffee shop. Cupcakes and pastries, made from scratch or brought in from Taproot Catering, contain zero preservatives and taunt customers from a lit case beside the cash register. If caffeine and sweets don’t do the job, bottles of wine are displayed on shelves along the back wall and are available for purchase. Some nights, the shop hosts wine tasting, joined by performances from local bands.

- ALYSSA MORLACCI
Mike's Place
1700 S. Water St. • 330-673-6501
Monday to Thursday 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., Friday to Saturday, 6 a.m. to midnight, Sunday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Part bus, part boat, part castle, complete with a full-sized X-Wing and enough Star Wars memorabilia to pack Skywalker Ranch, Mike's Place has made the quality $20 dinner for two a reality. Before heading out, skim the online menu, as it includes more than 100 items with countless customization options for carnivores and leaf-eaters alike. Feeling bold? Mike's offers the infamous “Challenge,” a 70-ounce, ground-beef abomination (It’s $30, but if you finish in 30 minutes, your bloated, salt-stained cheeks will be framed and immortalized on the restaurant’s entry wall). According to the menu, methods of payment include 1970s muscle car titles, R2-droids, tickets to the Elvis-Coming-Out-of-Hiding Concert Tour and Excalibur.

-ANTHONY DOMINIC

Laroush
425 Franklin Ave. • 330-548-5454
Monday to Saturday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

With all the falafel, hummus, pita and baba ganoush you could want at rock bottom prices, Laroush is a diamond in the rough. Located on the very edge of downtown, the restaurant is a little hard to find; but after one trip, you’ll always find your way back. Customers can choose from a variety of wraps, salads and platters brought to you from the Middle East by the owners themselves. I dare you to try and spend more than $15 without your gut busting. Go ahead and indulge with the “X-treme 15,” which includes 15 different vegetables in a wrap for only $6. Or be adventurous and try a green smoothie. And don’t forget to leave with some homemade Baklava for dessert.

-HALEY BAKER

For the complete dining guide, visit TheBurr.com.
Eighteen hours before this photograph was taken, I fell into the Chesapeake Bay of Baltimore’s Inner Harbor — camera, iPhone, wallet and all. I lost about $3,000 dollars in five seconds.

I went back to my hotel alone (after getting lost without my iPhone’s GPS). I stood in the glowing elevator, smelling of seaweed, as a well-dressed teenager eyeballed me oddly. When I got to my room, I shut the door, climbed into the shower and screamed.

The next day, I grabbed my spare camera only to realize I didn’t have a memory card. I struggled to hold it together — to not think about my lack of a camera, phone or money. Or the lens my dad had just bought for me for my birthday. Just get the photo.

After running around the Baltimore Convention Center for the better half of a day, hounding other photographers with my story of woe, I was given a 2-gigabyte card. This was the seventh photo I took.

This photograph has particular importance to me, as it represents my faith and my drive to succeed under all circumstances. This experience tested me. Pushed me to the limits, stripping me of all materialistic options (for the most part), and I was still able to come out of it OK.

If I can do this, I thought, I can do anything.
Congratulations to The Burr and TheBurr.com staff!

NATIONAL AWARDS – 2012
2012 Society of Professional Journalists
Mark of Excellence Awards

Non-Fiction Magazine Article
National Finalist
Joey Pompignano “In an Instant”

2012 Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Student

Magazine Contest
General Excellence, Third Place
Rabab Al-Sharif, Editor

Consumer Magazine Article
Feature, Third Place
Leighann McGivern, “Waiting for I Do”

2012 Associate Collegiate Press

Feature magazine
Best of Show, Second Place, Spring Issue 1
Rabab Al-Sharif, Editor

REGIONAL AWARDS – 2012
2012 Society of Professional Journalists
Mark of Excellence Awards, Region 4

Non-Fiction Magazine Article
First Place
Joey Pompignano “In an Instant”

Best Student Magazine
Second Place
Jennifer Shore, Editor

Student ADDY Award
American Advertising Federation - Akron

Publication Design, Cover
Silver Award
Thomas Song & Kelly Lipovich
“Putting the Pieces Back” Spring 2012, Issue 1

NATIONAL AWARDS – 2011
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

Investigation and Analysis
Second Place, Spring 2011
Joey Pompignano, “In an Instant”

First Person
Second Place, Spring 2011
Mark Haymond, “Jess and Mark: A Stage-three Love Story”

Student Society for News Design Contest

Overall Use Of Photography
First Place, Spring 2010
Kristina Deckert, art director

Overall Design of a Magazine Special Section
Third Place, Spring 2010
Kristina Deckert, art director
new lower rates! & property upgrades

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