life below the line
LIVING 10 DAYS ON $20

a funny thing about ‘ok’
OVERCOMING DEPRESSION

okay, cupid
STEREOTYPES IN ONLINE DATING

assignment:
adderall
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“What are two risks you want to take with The Burr?”

This question appears on the editor application each semester. While it was the most difficult question I had to answer, I wrote two goals: Launch a new website and redefine The Burr’s brand.

Check and check. In June, The Burr established a new logo and a new mission to provide not just Kent State, but the greater Northeast Ohio with strong, relatable stories, and in September, we launched the new theburr.com. What I didn’t realize was The Burr was about to take another risk. This semester, our writers set out to debunk stereotypes in society and on college campuses, focusing on in-depth research and storytelling.

They pushed themselves past their limits, travelling to new places, trying new things and telling personal stories that have never been shared before.

In “Assignment: Adderall,” senior editor Samantha Ickes investigates Adderall abuse by Kent State students, who use the prescription drug in order to stay up late doing homework. In “If ‘You Can Play,’ All Can Play,” writer Richard Mulhall analyzes how LGBTQ athletes feel in college and Kent State’s LGBTQ-inclusive initiative, starting with the “You Can Play” video.

On the cover, writer Jamie Brian steps in role of the 1.5 million Americans who live below the $2 a day poverty line in “Life Below the Line.”

Thank you for picking up The Burr. We hope you’ll take a risk and continue reading the rest of the issue.

Marissa Barnhart, Editor-in-Chief
Generation Progress educates, engages & mobilizes a new generation of young progressives.

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President Beverly Warren has set out to establish a new identity for the university. To do so, multiple buildings are under construction. Van Deusen Hall is one of two buildings undergoing renovation in conjunction with the university’s plan for the new center for the visual arts.

Originally a practical arts building, Van Deusen was built in 1951 and was later named for Clinton S. Van Deusen, who is considered a pioneer of Kent State’s technology program.

Van Deusen first came to Kent in 1913 and served as head of the industrial arts department until his retirement in 1942.

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.
GRADUATION WITH HONORS

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The Senior Honors Thesis/Project is an independent research, creative or applied project completed under the direction of a faculty member. Students who work closely with faculty though the process have unique advantages in demonstrating their scholarly commitment.
state of the university

THE GOOD

The liquid crystal program celebrates its 50th anniversary. Originally founded in 1965 by Glenn Brown, the Liquid Crystal Institute is the world’s first research center focused on the research and science of liquid crystals.

Julian Edelman, former Kent State football player and current wide receiver for the New England Patriots, served as the Homecoming Parade Grand Marshal Oct. 3.

Tickets to see comedian Amy Schumer sold out in the first week. Schumer will perform at 8 p.m. Dec. 6 in the M.A.C. Center.

THE BAD

A man was shot and critically injured at 2 a.m. Oct. 17 on the corner of East Main and Depeyster.

Three men were indicted Sept. 23 in connection to the two Kent State Army ROTC vans that were set on fire earlier this year. One of the vans was destroyed and the other was damaged.

Due to construction on Summit Street, the abundance of traffic has caused students to avoid the road at all costs.
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THE CURRENT
Culture, trends and lifestyle
During an argument, a guy told me I shouldn’t be the one who “wears the pants” in the relationship. He told me he hated how I didn’t need him.

I was 16 and in love, but his anger toward me for being independent made me feel like I had to change in order to keep him. He wanted to feel more masculine, and my independence got in the way of that. I would try to make myself seem smaller in order for men to not feel like they were inferior to me. I would not speak my mind as much, and I would let certain comments or actions go unnoticed in fear of losing him. It was always made clear in society that the man should be the stronger one in the relationship.

Growing up, I watched my strong-willed mother fail in relationships because of her reluctance to let a man control her. Watching her romantic struggles made me think being strong was unattractive. I had only ever seen her fail in relationships and at a young age, from my perspective, this appeared to be because of her self-sufficient nature.

Be Your Own Prince Charming

Women don’t need men to save them from life’s perils.
For as long as I could remember, I have always been told by men that I was “too much,” or that they needed to get their lives together before they could date me. Men have always been intimidated by the fact that I know exactly what I want and how I’m going to get it. Guys I’ve been romantically involved with have always had an issue with my mindset.

A damsel in distress, to me, is a woman who needs to be saved or fixed by a man because she does not think she has the ability to save herself from the hardships of life.

The “damsel” portrayal has appeared in romantic comedies, romance novels and some television sitcoms for decades. The movie “Friends with Benefits” is an accurate depiction of this. Jamie, the female protagonist is emotionally damaged, waiting to be swept off her feet. After being hurt time and time again, the male protagonist, Dylan, plays the role of her prince charming, saving her from all the bad guys who failed to provide her with the love she needed.

Classic fairy tales portray princesses as needy, waiting to be rescued from evil stepmothers and villains. In real life, men don’t storm the scene with their valiant steeds, saving women from perilous situations. Women shouldn’t be expected to wait for men, and men shouldn’t be expected to wait on a woman’s every need. Men and women also carry these stereotypes into the workplace and friendships.

If a man has more traditional views on gender roles and relationships and a woman does not, then there could be confrontation due to the differing views. This creates a power struggle for women when dealing with men because of these more traditional views on gender.

“Relationships are more successful—when we’re talking about heterosexual relationships—if the two people in that relationship have similar views on gender,” says communication studies professor Suzy D’Enbeau.

Gabrielle Woodard has experienced this power struggle first-hand. She and a male friend went to Washington D.C., where they spoke to professionals about their career aspirations. While speaking to a male professional, she asked all the questions while her friend was silent. Despite Woodard speaking directly to the man, the professional didn’t look at her.

“IF I WERE TO DUMB MYSELF DOWN LIKE THAT, IT NEGATES EVERYTHING THAT I’VE WORKED SO HARD TO GET”

—GABRIELLE WOODARD

“It was almost like I had made him uncomfortable,” Woodard says.

On the other hand, not all men find independent women intimidating or emasculating. Matt Bianco, a junior managerial marketing major and the president of his fraternity on campus, says he prefers having a high-power woman in his life as opposed to someone who is needy.

“I’d rather have somebody who is able to provide for themselves,” Bianco says. “I don’t think I’d want somebody who is in a relationship because they need to be.”

Bianco describes an independent woman as someone who does what she wants, doesn’t need constant approval and can stand on her own. While some popular culture promotes this mindset, like recent Disney-Pixar movies “Brave” and “Tangled,” some men still don’t share Bianco’s thinking.

“Personally, I don’t think [women] have to act less powerful to be seen as attractive,” Bianco says.

Many times men might feel they are holding back a strong, independent woman from her full potential, so they break off the relationship. In my own life, I have had relationships end because the guy feared he was holding me back, regardless if I disagreed.

“All of a sudden they break it off because they don’t want to hold me back, but I never thought that they were holding me back,” Woodard says.

Unfortunately, some women feel they need to limit their accomplishments in order to stay in relationships. This includes girls pretending to be less intelligent in conversations and refraining from more advanced academic programs in fear of seeming “bossy” or “intimidating.”

“If I were to dumb myself down like that, it negates everything that I’ve worked so hard to get,” Woodard says.

All of the opportunities and experiences Woodard has had should not be diluted because she wants to appear more attractive to men.

We live in a society that allows for more gender equality. We should be able to go through life and relationships without the idea some drastic change will make us seem desirable or attractive. Women have to be their own prince charming because it is no one else’s job to save them. There is no need for women to change themselves for men or feel as though they are in need of being saved or fixed by a man.

“Why would you change yourself for someone that’s temporary?” Woodard says.

Managing editor Heather Inglis contributed to this story.
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THE ANATOMY
Health, fitness and diet
A Funny Thing About ‘OK’

words by Adrian Leuthauser
photo by Erin McLaughlin
illustration by Alexis Scranton

Battling depression, Adrian Leuthauser learns how to keep himself afloat and cope while trying to help others along the way.
I n 2015, Teachers talked to students about missed assignments, kids grabbed binders and books from their lockers as they ran to beat the late bell. Instead of heading straight to class, I’d sit against the walls in the hallway. Talking to my soccer team about that day’s game, watching freshmen try to find their classrooms in hurried confusion—it was a good time, and it’s always worth looking back and smiling about.

At that point, everyone’s neurons were exploding one right after another as they talked and rushed to class. It’s a beautiful, chemical explosion in the brain. Each neuron bursting into thousands of different lights, triggering the next, setting off a display of color like on the Fourth of July during the finale. But for some reason, my fireworks never lit.

This magnificent yet chaotic beauty isn’t seen by everyone. Any glimpse we can hope to get is from the way people are interacting with us. How they feel, how expressions fit across their faces, how their eyes speak thousands of words—that’s the best way to read someone’s mind. Some people learn how to smile and act as if everything is OK, even if their mind is crumbling asunder with their very own thoughts.

My thoughts would eat away at me to the point where I didn’t know what was up and what was down. I wanted to swim out of my own mind, but my thoughts could swim right alongside me. It felt like they were trying to drown me. Any effort was futile as I kept sinking farther down. I knew I needed to get out, and I could not do this on my own, but speaking up was hopeless because my thoughts clogged my throat.

Depression is exhausting, especially in today’s society. Mental illnesses are rarely recognized as illnesses in the first place, and they are seen more as a “feeling” or “emotion.”

Pamela Farer-Singleton, the chief psychologist at Kent State, says “depression is an illness, not a weakness.”

I know when the agony of getting out of bed first started, when the depression hit. I felt like I shouldn’t speak out because of the fear people would judge and look down on me. It’s not like breaking an arm and wearing a cast, and walking into school the next day, people wanting to write their names on it because they feel bad. No one ever really feels bad about depression because they never see it. There’s no handwritten sympathy.

Robin Joynes, a psychology professor, says there are multiple causes for depression.

“Sometimes it’s an event, it might be a brain chemistry imbalance or a personality kind of thing,” Joynes says. “Some people might have the tendency to ruminate on things that are sad and anxiety-producing.”

Anxiety is a friend that usually walks hand in hand with depression, making things more difficult. Sometimes the anxiety just comes out of nowhere, but it typically will follow depression, especially clinical or major depression. According to the Mayo Clinic, anxiety may occur as a symptom of depression, but it’s also common to have depression due to anxiety. In the end, many people have both.

Neither are easy to mend. There are no vaccinations for them, and if there were, it wouldn’t work for everyone. The best someone with depression and anxiety can do is take antidepressants or go to therapy. Even then, it’s a long process because it can take weeks, sometimes months, for antidepressants to work.

I’ve been taking mine for two months now, and I am slowly noticing a difference. All the negative thoughts in my head aren’t swimming around as much. The voices have quieted down to a low whisper and hum. Occasionally, there will be one that gathers enough strength to scream and remind me of everything.

There are days when I ignore that scream and pretend it isn’t there. Sometimes, though, my mind’s shrieks of terror get to me. I won’t leave my room because I’m locked inside my own prison, curled up in a ball hyperventilating because I can’t cry anymore and all I want to do is scream to get out of my mind. The worst part is, I have the keys to get out, but the shrieks and howls wrap themselves around my hands, and I just can’t move.

I know my fireworks are somewhere waiting to be set off, but I just don’t have the energy to light them. I know this wave will eventually die down, but I just keep getting caught in the current. Those are some of the hardest days.

Approaching help with the idea that everything will immediately get better is wrong, and I think that’s why many people don’t stick with their medications. They think, “Oh, once I swallow this pill and close my eyes, I’ll open them again and everything will be all right.” But that’s not the case.

It’s a long-term relationship you have to constantly work on. According to a 2011 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 60 percent of Americans have been taking antidepressants for more than two years. I know it’s not the happy thought people are looking for when talking about depression, but it’s something that needs to be established and realized. For whatever reason, I have this ache in my stomach that’s telling me I’m not a normal human because I can’t make my own true happiness. But again, that’s the depression disconnecting the wires in my mind. The medication tries to help reconnect them. It’s a losing battle when you have depression—not to mention it’s probably one of the hardest battles to fight against.

Sarah Heber understands that constant battle, and for her, she does it without medication.

“[People] shouldn’t believe everything their mind is making them believe,” Heber explains. “This is a battle and as weird and as schizophrenic as it may sound, you really do have to fight your own mind sometimes to save yourself. Your mind is going to make you believe that you’re alone, that no one understands you except for the posts on Tumblr. Those are the only things that get you.”

The transition from high school to college helped Heber overcome some of the thoughts in her head because she’s away from a lot of problems she used to deal with. While she was growing up, she felt different from everyone else, and getting away helped.

“My parents don’t really believe in mental disorders,” Heber says. “So when I went to talk to my doctor about it...I went in for stomach pains. I felt pressured to answer in a particular way, and it got to the point where I had to take a pregnancy test because I would have
morning sickness, but I never could tell him what was actually wrong.”

Despite never really getting the proper help, Heber is happy where she is now and wouldn’t want to be anywhere else. She’s glad she has been through everything—the endless fights with her mind, the feeling of being alone, the feeling of doubt—because mentally, she’s stronger than ever. There are days when it becomes difficult to move, but when she can, Heber will go on a run to clear her mind, which usually does the trick.

Because she has been through so much, Heber is really happy about seeing when someone isn’t having a good day. She can sense something is wrong and can see the ensuing war inside that person. She’s not afraid to go up and talk with them.

As weird as it may sound, I think that’s one of the most amazing things about depression once you’ve been through it. You’re able to sense it and see it in a person because you’ve been there. You know what it’s like to have that war waging in your mind. I’m not as afraid as I used to be, and I think because of that I’m more apt to ask if someone is OK or needs someone to talk to, because that’s all some people need sometimes.

I went almost eight years without saying a word. People would always ask me if I was OK, and I would just smile and say “of course.” At the time, I was in some very dark places that I wish to never revisit. Somehow, I made it out alive, breathing. Not having someone to talk with and get those demons out is horrible.

Having someone, though, can honestly save your life. Especially if it is someone who knows what it’s like to go through this brief period of madness in your head.

Brief. That’s what all of this is. It may not seem like it, and I know eight years felt like an eternity, but in the grand scheme of things, it’s nothing. It really is just a brief period of madness. I felt like I was going nowhere—like I had absolutely no direction in my life. I was going somewhere. I just didn’t know it.

The person you are today is very different from the person you were in middle school, in high school, last year—even yesterday. The person you are in this moment in time, as you read this, has shaped you into you. It might seem cheesy to say, but everything that has happened to you, every consequence and every outcome of those consequences has formed the person that you are today.

Depression is something that should never be wished upon someone or discussed negatively. There are many people who are successful all while fighting their demons: Owen Wilson, Robin Williams and Gwyneth Paltrow, to name a few. Some have lost this long battle and Robin Williams, considered one of the funniest actors around, unfortunately, was one of them.

He brought so much joy and happiness to people through his comedy and his movies, yet he was drowning and couldn’t find his own joy. Williams once said, “Comedy can be a cathartic way to deal with personal trauma.” He made everyone laugh, he made everyone happy, but unfortunately that’s what people with depression do. Instead of finding ways to make themselves happy, they try to make other people happy and laugh because they don’t want the people around them to feel the way they feel.

Seeing my friends and family laugh reassures me I’m making someone happy, even if that person isn’t me. It becomes a priority to make sure people close to me are OK. I wish I could tell you why it becomes a priority that I end up putting others first instead of myself. Trust me, if I could I would spew out the words in a second. But I can’t. I’m not sure what it is or why; all I know is that’s who I am. That’s who I have become because of the depression.

I’m OK with that, honestly. I’m OK with putting others in front of me. Truthfully, that’s what I prefer. It’s not that I’m trying to run away from my depression or my own war. I’m not waving the white flag any time soon. I’m just stepping off my own battlefield for a moment and walking onto someone else’s because they need the help and support. I might not completely win the battles with them, but at least I can help. It will be better than before; better than when their minds took that first shot. It’ll be OK.

And there’s a funny thing about being OK: Being OK is wonderful.
THE CLASS
Kent State students, alumni and activities
Sleeping Sickness

For more than five years, Amanda Rohrlick has fought her sleep paralysis to regain control of her body.

words by Lydia Taylor | illustration by Alexis Scranton
The world is draped in darkness; the mind’s gears turn, signalling arms, legs and eyes, but they remain unmoving. Time seems frozen with the exception of noises ringing here and there. The subconscious screams “Wake up,” but it’s unfeasible. Amanda Rohrlick, 22, has lived with sleep paralysis since she was in eighth grade.

Waking up from an afternoon nap on the couch, Rohrlick, a community health education major, realized something was wrong when she couldn’t move her body. She couldn’t move her fingers, her toes or her head—not even a small twitch of her muscles. She remembers hearing noises around her and not being able to react to them. When her body woke up, she had a hard time coping with what happened to her.

“My mind woke up, but my body didn’t,” Rohrlick recalls. “It was super terrifying. I was so scared and went running to my dad crying because it was so scary.”

Sleep paralysis, as defined by the Periodic Paralysis Association, is “a transient state of inability to move and to speak at sleep onset (hypnagogic form) or on awakening (hypnopompic form).” Sleep paralysis could last anywhere between 30 seconds to a minute.

WebMD reports 4 out of 10 people may have sleep paralysis. Additionally, 25-30 percent of people around the world experience at least one episode, according to the 2011 book, “Sleep Paralysis: Night-mare, Nocebos, and the Mind-body Connection.”

“Many, many people experience sleep paralysis in their life,” says Earl Rogers, a registered sleep technologist at University Hospital Portage Medical Center. “It can be as common as everyone depending on how fatigued or tired you really are.”

Rogers says sleep paralysis is a symptom that could be related to different issues, such as sleep deprivation, or other sleep disorders like narcolepsy and cataplexy. People with repeated occurrences of sleep paralysis usually come in to get sleep tests done to determine whether or not there is an underlying problem at hand. Rohrlick, however, has never been to a sleep doctor to get her sleep paralysis tested before.

Sleep paralysis occurs when an individual wakes during the Rapid Eye Movement cycle, Rogers says. When REM occurs, the muscles become paralyzed to prevent a person from acting out a dream. If a person wakes during this REM cycle, sleep paralysis will occur, making it impossible to move or speak.

“When they’re laying there awake in the morning,” Rogers says, “Sometimes their eyes are open, but they can’t speak or move their limbs, so they don’t have any voluntary limb movement.”

Rohrlick explained her experience to her parents, but they tried to convince her it was just a bad dream or a figment of her imagination. Though she didn’t realize it then, her parents set a trend over the next few years. No one believed Rohrlick—not even her closest friends. She knew what was happening to her sounded crazy, but she also knew it was real.

Five years later as a senior in high school, Rohrlick’s psychology teacher assigned a paper about sleep disorders. Her curiosity peaked as she began to think about what sleep disorder she would research. She realized what she was experiencing was in fact a sleep disorder.

Hoping for answers, she typed into Google exactly what had been happening to her: “I’m asleep but my mind is
Perhaps the most interesting of Rohrlick's experiences were the times she was sleeping, and she felt like someone is holding me down, and I knew I was having my sleep paralysis, but I couldn't wake up because of the pressure," Rohrlick says, placing her hand on her chest and recalling the pain she had felt. "It was terrifying, and when I woke up, nobody was there."

After this incident, it took Rohrlick a while to cope with having sleep paralysis. Even from the beginning, she didn't know what to think about it, and the "old hag" experience made this even more difficult for her. She was confused because her siblings and parents didn't have similar problems, and she didn't know how to handle these random occurrences. Rohrlick was on her own. She couldn't ask for advice on how to handle these moments of paralysis.

Despite how scary the first few encounters were, Rohrlick's sleep paralysis has not all been frightening experiences. She remembers a few humorous situations her disorder put her in.

As a freshman in high school, Rohrlick fell asleep in one of her classes. Her teacher frequently asked the students questions throughout the lecture. When she fell asleep with her head in her hands, she tried to jerk herself awake. Her mind suddenly woke up, and her hearing was back in tune with her surroundings, but she couldn't move a muscle. Her sleep paralysis had kicked in.

"Oh crap," Rohrlick thought as she heard her teacher talking. From the closeness of his voice, she thought he had been right next to her about to ask her a question. She became nervous, afraid she wouldn't be able to wake up in time to answer the question and get in trouble for taking a nap in class. She dodged a bullet when she woke up and realized he wasn't as close to her as she thought he was.

Eventually, Rohrlick just got used to it happening. She started to block out the negativity she was receiving from her peers, and after learning about her condition in high school, she has completely accepted having sleep paralysis.

"I've fully embraced it and love telling people about it," Rohrlick says. "Sometimes, I think it's more fun to scare people with it and actually be like, 'yeah, I am from the Devil.'"

Though Rohrlick was initially bothered by her family's and friends' lack of understanding, she now thinks of it in a lighter mood. In fact, her sleep paralysis is a running joke within her family. Her father teases her all the time and encourages her to try the out-of-body experience. As hard as she tries, she still hasn't had one yet.

She is currently trying to learn how to twitch her muscles when entering sleep paralysis. Whenever she sleeps at a friend's house she asks, "Did you see my fingers move?" hoping one day she will be able to achieve it. She no longer sees this disorder as something out of the ordinary. In Rohrlick's eyes, it's now part of her and, it's a part she likes to share with others.

"If I had to decide not to have sleep paralysis, if I could totally make it go away or have it, I would probably still keep it just because it makes my life interesting," she says.

Senior editor Samantha Ickes contributed to this story.

“I’VE FULLY EMBRACED AND LOVE TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT IT.”
—AMANDA ROHRICK

As a freshman in high school, Rohrlick fell asleep in one of her classes. Her teacher frequently asked the students questions throughout the lecture. When she fell asleep with her head in her hands, she tried to jerk herself awake. Her mind suddenly woke up, and her hearing was back in tune with her surroundings, but she couldn't move a muscle. Her sleep paralysis had kicked in.
Assignment: Adderall

Kent State students using Adderall to help them study for longer periods of time are a part of a growing trend.

words by Samantha Ickes | photos by Maria Cardillo

*EDITOR'S NOTE: STUDENTS' NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT THEIR IDENTITIES.
“TEN MILLIGRAMS IS ALL I NEED, SHE SAYS TO HERSELF, SPLITTING THE PILL IN HALF AND WASHING IT DOWN WITH A SWIG OF WATER”

—KYLIE

Kylie* wraps a rubber band around her hair, brushing rogue strands out of her face. She sighs deeply and looks at the clock: 7 p.m. It seems like all her classes schedule exams and papers at the same time. Kylie swears it feels as if the professors get together to create “hell week.”

As a senior nursing student, Kylie finds it difficult to study in between attending classes, clinicals and a part-time job. Even though she knows she doesn’t need it, Kylie reaches into the back of her desk drawer and pulls out an orange and white pill.

It acts as a safeguard for Kylie. Stronger than caffeine, with its help she can stay awake long enough to power through all her work. Without it it will take longer, and sometimes the easy path needs to be taken when her grade is on the line.

“Ten milligrams is all I need,” she says to herself, splitting the pill in half and washing it down with a swig of water.

According to a CNN article written by Arianna Yanes, students using Adderall without a prescription to stay awake at night and study or to help them be more productive is a growing problem. Adderall abuse isn’t similar to drugs like Molly because students aren’t misusing the drugs for partying. Because of this, it has been dubbed the “study drug.”

During Kylie’s sophomore year, she found herself struggling to find a balance between school and a social life as her classes began to get more difficult. It was then Kylie decided to take Adderall after another student offered it to her.

“I was like, ‘Wow, it just makes homework more enjoyable,’ ” Kylie says. “It makes studying enjoyable. It helps me really get into it to kind of prioritize what I need to get to get done.”

Deric Kenne, associate director of drug research at Kent State, says the study drug is a growing problem at the university as well. In a 2013 survey, of 8,600 Kent State students, 8.5 percent reported misusing Adderall. The percentage increased slightly to 9.5 percent in 2014, and according to the National Council on Patient Information and Education, one in four people ages 18 to 20 reported using prescription pills for nonmedical reasons at least once.

In the past three years, Kent has only experienced one Adderall related arrest in February 2015. Officer Tricia Knoles for Kent State Police Services says it hasn’t been an issue on campus.

“Adderall stimulates the central nervous system, so it makes you more alert and energetic,” Kenne says. “Because of this, students feel Adderall helps them study better—a student could take Adderall and then stay up all night studying. Otherwise, the student would get tired, be unable to concentrate and be unable to study well.”

Kylie says she only takes Adderall once a month when she needs “extra motivation to get stuff done.” She buys four or five pills at a time and keeps them until she finds herself needing an extra boost. Sometimes taking Adderall can offer her more energy and motivation than a cup of coffee can when she has a full day ahead of her.

“It’s the best way to stay up all night and get eight hours work of homework done,” she adds. “I think that’s the main thing—it allows you to focus for longer. It makes you feel like you have to be doing something. It’s hard to just sit there and watch TV or something.”

Though Kylie has taken Adderall throughout her four years at Kent State, she doesn’t plan to continue its use after she applies for graduate school. As a nurse, Kylie will have to take random drug tests. She says taking Adderall is not worth risking her profession as a nurse.

A study done by a National Survey on Drug Use and Health reports that full-time students are twice as likely to use Adderall non-medically compared to part-time students. In a 2008 study, 81 percent of students interviewed thought using ADHD medication without being prescribed was “not at all dangerous.”

Kenne says side effects of Adderall include restlessness, trouble sleeping, weight loss, mood change, increased heart rate and anxiety, while short-term benefits include improved concentration.

“There tends to be a perception that prescription drugs, including Adderall, are safe to misuse or experiment with because they are used medically and prescribed by physicians,” Kenne says. “However, prescription drugs, including Adderall can be very dangerous and even fatal when not used under the supervision of a physician or if misused.”

Lucas, a sophomore public health major, feels jittery and can hear his heart beating faster when he takes Adderall. Within 30 minutes of taking the pill, he feels a surge of energy and adrenaline that makes it impossible to sit still.

“Your body feels normally, but you can notice that you’re more focused,” he says. “You can zone in on more things you want to focus on.”

Lucas tried Adderall for the first time during high school when a friend offered to sell him the drug. He and a friend were hanging out after school his junior year when his friend mentioned he tried it. Lucas remembers sitting in his friend’s room when his friend pulled out a baggie with a few of the pills in it.

After hearing about the benefits of Adderall, Lucas didn’t see a reason not to try the drug and mainly tried it out of pure curiosity. If it could improve his focus and help him finish his homework in time to hang out with his friends, why not try it? Lucas continues to take it throughout the school year every two to three weeks.

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“It really can help you block out everything,” he says. “Whatever you have in mind—whatever task you have to do. It just helps your mind do what you want to do. When I know I need to kick into a different gear, that’s when I would say I’d take it.”

As Lucas sits at his desk in his dorm room, he puts his head in his hands and contemplates if he should take Adderall to get all his homework done. It’s already after 9 p.m., and he’s not even halfway through his 10-page research paper due within the next 12 hours.

Though Lucas says Adderall has been beneficial in helping him study, he says people use the study drug as an excuse, including himself. He knows he doesn’t need it to complete his work, but it makes it easier, and sometimes making the easier choice is best when you’re in school and working throughout the week.

Adam, 20, used Adderall when he attended Kent State as a freshman. The summer before his first year of college in 2014 was his first. Late one evening, after work, Adam sat outside with a co-worker, who asked if he wanted to try it.

He didn’t need it to study during the summer, but he was curious as to how it would affect him because he doesn’t have ADHD or ADD.

Adam could feel his mouth drying as if he swallowed cotton and his heartbeat increasing with each breath. He felt overwhelmed with this euphoric feeling that made him want to talk to everyone he met. It felt as if he couldn’t fail no matter what the task. With his newfound confidence, he felt as if he had a false sense of intelligence, as if he could accomplish anything.

Since then, Adam has taken Adderall five times. One of those times was during exam week when he needed some extra energy to finish studying. Throughout the semester, Adam received an 80 percent average on all his exams, but after studying under the influence of Adderall, he passed with a 95 percent.

Students generally purchase Adderall from other students who are prescribed the medication. The inexpensiveness of the drug contributes to its increasing popularity among college students.

“It is relatively easy to get the drug from friends or other students—in some cases, individuals who have a legitimate prescription for Adderall will sell the drug to other students,” Kenne says.

Hannah, a senior hospitality management major, says she sells Adderall for $5 per 25 milligram pill. Hannah was prescribed Adderall her junior
year of high school and never thought about selling it until someone on her floor in her residence hall during her freshman year sought her out to ask if she would be willing to sell the pill.

Movie scenes where a hooded figure slips an individual baggie full of drugs in a back alley might come to mind when thinking about a drug deal. Deals are often in isolated areas and secretive to not attract attention of bypassers or the police. Adderall transactions, however, are not as behind the scenes as other drug exchanges because the medication itself is legal. Hannah sells to the same group of seven to 10 students regularly. She says it’s not like a “stereotypical, super-secret drug deal.” The students who buy from Hannah come over to the house when they want to buy. She hands them the pill, and they hand her the money.

“People wanted it, and I wanted quick cash,” she says.

The trend among Kent State students shows students tried the drug out of curiosity after hearing about the benefits Adderall provided to other students. Students don’t see the harm in taking the medication without a prescription because of the infrequency it’s taken.

With easy access to Adderall, it’s no wonder the misuse of the drug has been on the rise. Kenne says the drug can become addictive when the body begins to rely on the use of the drug because of the effect it has on neurotransmitters. The same effect would happen to a person who drinks a large cup of coffee every day for several months then quits cold turkey.

Students like Kylie, Lucas and Adam say they are not addicted to the drug. Adam says he no longer plans to use Adderall. Similar to Lucas, he feels as though people use the drug as an excuse if they don’t need it for medical reasons. He sees no point in taking Adderall when he can accomplish his goals without relying on it.

The majority of users take the drug sporadically—when they need extra help during the semester. However, with the increasing popularity and accessibility of the drug, a question raises: Will an addiction problem among college students become an issue?
If ‘You Can Play,’ All Can Play
LGBTQ-athletes find acceptance in Kent State’s “You Can Play” video.

words by Richard Mulhall

Rebecca Windover, a former Alfred University soccer player and recent Kent State graduate, didn’t fear as much as other athletes. The big games never worried her. Tough opponents never intimidated her. The threat of injury never scared her.

In spite of all this, Windover spent much of her life living in fear. Fear of being herself. Fear of being a lesbian.

“For me, it was very confusing, very isolating,” Windover says. “It’s your college years, and it’s supposed to be the best time in your life. You get to college, and you’re miserable. Depression, suicide ideation—all those things are real-life frustrations that occur for people who are closeted or people who don’t feel accepted for being who they are.”

In order to appease her community and keep her identity a secret from family, friends and teammates, Windover negated the true nature of her identity and chose to live her life as a heterosexual.

REBECCA’S STORY
Windover grew up in the small, rural town of Lowville, New York, which was as religious and conservative as many could expect a small-town dynamic to be.

It was the kind of town where children were expected to follow traditions laid out by parents and grandparents, which meant following what people deemed the conventional norms of society. Windover went to high school at Lowville Academy and Central School, where diversity was far outside the realm of ubiquity.

“The amount of minority students, I can count on one hand,” Windover says.

After high school, Windover attended Alfred University, also located in a small, New York town. Alfred was a pleasant change from Lowville. Unlike high school, Alfred University as a whole was liberal and inclusive. Its athletic program, though, was a different story.

While studying and playing soccer at Alfred, Windover quickly learned the culture created by athletics. If people identified as gay or lesbian, they typically weren’t open about it for fear of being ostracized, Windover says.

“It becomes a theory that anyone who identifies as a lesbian is attracted to every female that walks the Earth,” Windover says.

Athletics operated as its own entity and adopted an intolerant culture of its own, Windover says. The university’s soccer program functioned under an unwritten “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy that essentially dictated no lesbians allowed, which clashed with the university’s formal non-discrimination policy in the student-athlete handbook. When the team traveled to away games, for example,
lesbians were not allowed to share the same hotel room as straight players.

The suppressing culture prevented Windover from being herself. During undergrad, Windover partied, dated guys and did everything she could to blend with what she perceived to be a predominantly heterosexist environment governed by an unwritten dogma that people couldn’t be gay or lesbian. Her “socially acceptable” camouflage ostensibly worked for those around her.

The only person she couldn’t deceive by her ruse was herself. She felt uncomfortable hiding in the closet and grew weary of continually putting on a façade. It wasn’t until after Windover graduated and enrolled at Kent State for graduate school that she finally decided she was tired of pretending.

Windover, now 24, came out publicly Oct. 12, 2013 and hasn’t looked back since. It was her time, and Kent State was the perfect place to do it.

“I felt, for the first time in my life, that I was in a community that was accepting and inclusive,” Windover says. “You can’t go into a department without seeing a safe zone sticker, and so that just meant that I felt included. I knew I wasn’t going to be judged or discriminated going in.”

Windover was coming from a small, private, liberal university with a student population of about 2,300 to a large, public, progressive liberal university with a student population of about 29,000. When Windover discovered Kent State organizations like PRIDE! and Black United Students, she realized the influence students have on campus and wanted to make a difference by coming out.

Windover’s parents, John and Lori, met her disclosure with open arms despite her fear of their initial reaction.

“If I knew the way my parents would respond, I would have come out a long time ago,” Windover says. “It took [my friends] a while to develop an understanding. And I did lose some friends, but for the most part, I gained so many more, and when I came out [publicly], I had so many people reach out to me.”

She found GO! Athletes, a national group of LGBTQ student-athletes online.

“A lot of us in the group were closeted at the time, and there were a lot of people who were out, too,” Windover says. “Seeing that we’re literally hundreds of us who shared a similar story, but some of us found more support than others.”

One such athlete who received much support when she came out was junior Kent State softball player Janel Hayes, who has had a much different experience in intercollegiate athletics.

EXEMPLAR OF ACCEPTANCE

Hayes, who has identified as a lesbian since her senior year of high school, has been met with nothing but positive support from those around her.

When she began college hunting near the end of high school, she gauged prospective universities’ overall acceptance level of LGBTQ athletes and found Kent State would soon become home for her—a place that would allow her to be herself.

“The girls on the team were really accepting,” Hayes says. “Everyone on the team was really cool with it.”

When Hayes made her college visit to Kent State, the diversity of the student body along with the tolerance the softball coaching staff and players demonstrated toward LGBTQ athletes became major selling points that made Hayes’ decision a little easier.

Some of Hayes’ teammates, who were new to having LGBTQ teammates, were hesitant at first. But through team-bonding experiences and various locker room shenanigans, they have become close and a long way from where they were before coming to Kent State.

“The coming out process is faced with so many roadblocks as a whole, so you don’t want the roadblock to be the one thing you love the most,” Windover says. “And that’s your sport.

I applaud the softball team and the softball coaches and their staff, and especially the teammates on welcoming this athlete. Her sexual orientation doesn’t dictate whether she’s a great athlete or not. We are our best selves when all of our one self is allowed to show up.”

Hayes has never experienced locker room issues—something that all too often becomes part of the territory of coming out as an athlete. Hayes’ experience in Kent State athletics might be proof that the 113-year-old school is progressing into an era in which teams with LGBTQ student-athletes are becoming the norm.

“When student-athletes that are looking to go to college that happen to be gay or lesbian see that a college is putting themselves out there to let them know, it’s also more comforting for them, too,” Hayes says.

Even though Kent State has made great strides in the ways of diversity and equality for LGBTQ student-athletes, times are still tough.

YOU CAN PLAY

Although athletics across the country is still not perfect, it has vastly improved.

Kent State recently underscored this growing acceptance when the athletic department launched its “You Can Play” video.

Campus Pride’s 2012 LGBTQ National College Athlete Report revealed some glaring statistics. Out of the 394 individuals who identified as LGBTQ, one in four LGBTQ student-athletes said they were pressured to stay silent about their sexual identity among teammates, and 21 percent said they were the targets of discrimination in the form of derogatory remarks via email, Facebook, social media and other electronic means, which is almost double that of the athletes’ heterosexual counterparts.

Windover can attest to some of these statistics. After earning her master’s degree in higher education administration, Windover did extensive research on LGBTQ student-athletes, finding student-athletes everywhere struggle with their sexual orientation and are often the targets of discrimination and harassment.

In her research for NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, Windover describes how homophobia has taken over collegiate athletics, writing that athletes often remain closeted for fear of being outed, and athletics is home to many negative recruiting processes.

Windover says the unwritten rule of “no lesbians allowed” at Alfred was not just a university-specific policy, but a nation-wide policy among many intercollegiate athletic programs, including the Penn State women’s basketball program, which was cited in the 2009 documentary “Training Rules.”

The award-winning film chronicles former head coach Rene Portland’s policy of discrimination of her players based on their sexual orientation over a 27-year period.
There’s still an environment within athletics, there’s a fear of being outed,” PRIDE! President Brandon Stephens says. “If an LGBTQ athlete stands up and speaks out against the athletic department in terms of the environment for LGBTQ athletes, it can get troublesome, and it could potentially be the end of an athletic career.”

With identifying as LGBTQ comes the threat of scholarships and financial aid that most athletes refuse to jeopardize. While Windover didn’t have to worry because she was on an academic scholarship, many Division I athletes who rely on athletic scholarships fear coaches will cut them and, in turn, expunge their scholarship if they identify.

“An athlete being outted or outing themselves can be kind of scary, especially when the environment is still so tumultuous,” Stephens says. “It’s very difficult to bring yourself as an institution out of that environment because it involved a lot of change. In order to enact real, worthwhile change, a lot of those things have to be done, and those things take time.”

In order to mend the disconnect between LGBTQ athletes and university athletics, Windover has called for discussion panels, coach screenings and safe-space training.

“A coach needs to be willing to learn about sexual orientations and how they affect the team,” she says.

There might be coaches who don’t know how to deal with and handle situations that arise concerning LGBTQ athletes, which is why education is vital to the shifting paradigm.

A few years ago, Windover says, one Kent State coach (who will remain anonymous) felt he lost LGBTQ recruits because, when potential students made their campus visits and met with the team, the team deterred them.

Stephens believes the university should adopt a zero-tolerance policy, which relates to the athletic department’s handling of the Sam Wheeler incident in which the former Kent State wrestler was suspended indefinitely from the team for anti-gay tweets aimed at NFL player Michael Sam.

The athletic department took swift and strict action against Wheeler’s misconduct, but negative feelings stemmed from all sides in regard to the manner in which the athletic department handled the situation.

Many felt the university only suspended Wheeler because of a donor who called and complained about the incident was involved, Stephens says. Individuals within the community and PRIDE! felt the university and the athletic department acted independently without consulting LGBTQ students.

“We extended an olive branch to athletics in order to have a conversation, and we were met with slammed doors every direction we turned,” Stephens says.

The “You Can Play Project” is a national project dedicated to ensuring equality, respect and safety for all athletes, regardless of sexual orientation, and works to guarantee that athletes are given a fair opportunity to compete.

The effort to create a “You Can Play” video for Kent State had been present for years, but the abstract concept lacked concrete direction and initial impetus to get the project going. That is, until Windover stepped up and got the ball rolling.

By collaborating with key Kent State public figures to see the initiative through, Windover put the plan in motion. The video would also not have been possible without an ally who’s been a long-time advocate of promoting diversity and fostering a safe supporting community for LGBTQ students: President Beverly Warren.

“Being able to have an institutional president say that this is what I believe, this is what I support and this is what this institution is all about was huge,” Windover says.

Warren’s powerful message encouraging students “to be their most authentic selves” precedes the video.

“It is a university that accepts you for who you are and pushes you to become more than you’ve ever imagined you could be,” Warren says in the video. “Our students know that no matter your background, your culture or your sexual orientation, you belong here.”

The video follows students from a wide array of sports addressing prospective Kent student-athletes, affirming them that their sexual orientation doesn’t affect whether they can play. It ends with a poignant message from Kent State Athletic Director Joel Nielsen, whose words push the video’s point home.

“As Golden Flashes, we strive to be accessible, safe-space allies for LGBTQ students,” Nielsen says. “It doesn’t matter who you are, where you’re from or what sport you belong to here at Kent State. If you can play, you can play.”
The “You Can Play” initiative is historically prolific because it didn’t exist until Windover began pressing for one to be made in 2014.

“My desire is that we continue to be an inclusive community, so the ‘You Can Play’ video opportunity just really is one more example of many of the things that we’re doing to make sure that everyone feels welcomed and valued here,” Warren says.

Nielsen declined to comment on this story, but LGBTQ Student Center Director Ken Ditlevson has big plans to work with the athletic department in the near future. He says “You Can Play” is one step in a multi-phase strategic plan to make Kent State Athletics an accepting, more diverse entity.

TAKING THE INITIATIVE

Ditlevson, who has been at Kent State for less than a year, found a connection in athletics in Angie Hull, director for student-athlete Academic Services, who created the name for the “Flashes of PRIDE!” poster campaign.

The poster, created by the Kent State Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and displayed on walls all around campus, features allies to the LGBTQ community, as well as members of the LGBTQ community whose sexual orientations range from gay and lesbian to pansexual and everything in between. Students can use the poster information to network with allies if they ever need help.

Hull also helped Ditlevson form the LGBTQ Student Center Staff/Faculty Advisory Council (LSAC), which is a body of representatives across the university that guides the LGBTQ Student Center and serve as a networking reference for underrepresented students on campus.

Ditlevson wanted to equip Kent State students, faculty and staff with the tools to create safe spaces and welcoming environments for LGBTQ students and help them network with allies. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about the LGBTQ community and interact with students who identify as LGBTQ.

Ditlevson wants to contact the athletic department to schedule safe space training sessions for the teams, as the only session so far was geared toward faculty and staff. The Kent State softball, football and basketball coaches approached Ditlevson after the training and requested team training for their respective teams, showing him that the training session was met with positive feedback.

“The coaches and head administrators were really on board and very interested, asked some amazingly engaged questions, and they actually requested that we do student team trainings as follow-up, which we’re working on finishing,” Ditlevson says.

Holding open forums and even conferring policy changes are also avenues Ditlevson would like to explore, as the athletic department’s inclusion policy consists of just one sentence on page 56 of the Kent State Student-athlete Handbook. Updating and improving language and eliminating ambiguous language in the policy is just another step in the process.

“Talking about it in an open forum where people can ask questions in a safe environment is really important,” Ditlevson says. “The more inclusive policy statements we have, the more backing we have when there are issues, we can refer back to that. Thankfully we have a strong, overarching discrimination policy for Kent, but [it’s better] when you drill even down further at a department level.”

Changing policies and eventually a culture starts with baby steps like the Safe-Space Ally Training sessions, and Ditlevson hopes the “You Can Play” and Safe-Space Ally program will be the first steps toward overarching, campus-wide change.

CHANGING CULTURE

The “You Can Play” video is just one small step in an elaborate, extensive plan to change not only a historically toxic environment in athletics but also the overall culture at Kent State.

“We’re really doing all athletes a disservice by not providing a warm and welcoming environment,” Stephens says. “Kent State Athletics is definitely hinting at change that is coming, and they’re taking baby steps right now, which I think is very important.”

Athletics partnering with the LGBTQ Student Center to do a progressive video is just another example of how far Kent State has come in terms of promoting diversity, Warren says.

“What I’m encouraging is more cross-division

“THE COMING OUT PROCESS IS FACED WITH SO MANY ROADBLOCKS AS A WHOLE, SO YOU WON’T WANT THE ROADBLOCK TO BE THE ONE THING YOU LOVE. AND THAT’S YOUR SPORT.”

—REBECCA WINDOVER
collaboration around subjects and topics and attitudes that are important as we move forward as a university, so keeping the dialogue open [is key]," Warren says. "We could be an exemplar of really providing great education and awareness."

The video intends for Warren’s message to spread throughout athletics and reach all other facets of Kent State.

“The theme of it should be your sexual orientation doesn’t matter—no matter who you are, you belong here,” Windover says.

UNIVERSAL CHANGE

When Windover came out, she felt a sense of satisfying relief. But like many life-altering decisions, coming out was bittersweet because along with the relief came a hint of disappointment.

Windover is still waiting for the day when LGBTQ student-athletes don’t need to “come out,” much like the way straight people don’t need to. The LGBTQ community also wants to see sweeping change across the country.

Windover is an example of that widespread change, as she is currently engaged to be married—something she legally wouldn’t have been able to do five years ago.

“Look at how much has changed in two years for the LGBTQ community,” Windover says. “You can get married in any state that you want, and that is huge. It’s life after sport. You want these student-athletes to be able to get into the workforce and be accepting of one another.”

“**A COACH NEEDS TO BE WILLING TO LEARN ABOUT SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS AND HOW THEY AFFECT THE TEAM.**”

—REBECCA WINDOVER

COURTESY OF KSU ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

SOFTBALL PLAYER JANEL HAYES CAME TO KENT STATE BECAUSE OF THE UNIVERSITY’S ACCEPTANCE OF LGBTQ STUDENTS.
Life Below the Line

A 10-day challenge of living on $2 a day, the national poverty line.

words by Jamie Brian
photos by Jacqueline Wammes

THE CHALLENGE: STOCKING UP

I have a crinkled $20 bill in my pocket, and I'm standing in the first aisle of the Kent Save-A-Lot trying to make the paper a little bit thicker so it can last for the next 10 days.

It’s not the first time I’ve been here, but I can’t stop bouncing from one foot to another with anxiety. I have to make my purchases count because when they’re gone, I can’t restock. I’m not on a diet. I’m trying to slip into the shoes of the 1.5 million households living in $2-a-day poverty, according to the 2015 study “$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America.”

Shuffling from produce to canned goods, I begin plugging numbers into my borrowed calculator. The money seems to slip through my fingers; faster than I can process, it’s gone.

I pick things off of a shelf just to gingerly put them back when I realize they’re out of my price range. I’ve discovered $20 gets you half a basket of groceries and requires a game of choice. If you want granola bars, you’ll have to cut them in half because there aren’t enough of them to last the week. If you get the chicken, you’ll have to put the apples and cheese back because you’re over budget. This or that. You can’t always get what you want.

At the register, I forget grocery bags cost extra, and I didn’t bring any of my own. I had to put the jar of jelly back if I want to make it home with my food intact. I had planned on having peanut butter and jelly throughout the week, but I’ll have to do without it. I take stock of my purchases and hope it’s enough to get me through the next 10 days: nine oranges, one...
I toss my rumpled T-shirt into the laundry bin and realize how hungry I am. If I eat the bread, I’ll be even hungrier later in the day. I opt for an orange and a bowl of cereal, but they aren’t enough to feel full. I hear a microwave in the room next to me ding, and I imagine warm oatmeal with cinnamon. Looking back at my own microwave, I realize there’s no use for it.

By noon, I’m craving the mac and cheese. I need to save it because I only have two boxes. I can have a pudding cup and carrots. I’ll save the bread for dinner. During class, all I can think about is the jar of peanut butter I’ve stored in the top left corner of the fridge and the sandwich I can create with it. I feel like a contestant on a survival show, stranded in the desert, walking toward that uncertain drop of water.

I’m a little ashamed of myself for feeling so desperate this early on. I decide I’ll have to give up my daily run if I want to get through the week. I total my daily calorie intake, and I’m only living on about 800 calories per day, significantly less than the recommended 2,000-calorie diet. I’ll miss the freedom of waking up to dew on my sneakers and train whistles, but I’d rather be able to focus instead of feeling hungry.

Tuesday seems to go a little smoother. I’ve tried to fine-tune my plan for the week, and I feel more energized without using up all of my calories on a morning run. I’m OK with waking up to a granola bar and half of an orange. It’s enough to get me through my early classes. At noon, I trudge back to my dorm and look forward to opening the gallon of milk to go with cereal. I must have started to feel too confident, because I take the cap off and end up spilling some of it on the floor. My first thought isn’t that I need to clean up the carpet; it’s how much I’m going to miss those few cold mouthfuls of milk.

The next few days involve giving up things I’ve taken for granted. Working out expends too much energy. On Wednesday, my friends ask me if I’d like to get lunch or coffee, but I decline. I never realized how much friendship revolves around food, but friendship is not in my price range right now. If I were to go to McDonald’s, the cheapest thing I could get is a McChicken or a BBQ Ranch Burger from the dollar menu, but neither of those would last me all day. On my way to class, I watch the groups huddled together on a picnic bench with iced cappuccinos in hand, and I can’t help but feel jealous. Back at my dorm, I bitterly slather peanut butter on a slice of bread. When that’s not enough, I eat more out of the jar with a spoon. For dinner, I try and think of ways to make my meager meal more interesting. I plate my carrots into a spiral. Carrots are one of my favorite foods, but they aren’t quite enough to make me feel full.

I try dunking them in chocolate pudding. It’s a combination I probably wouldn’t try under different circumstances, but I like it enough to decide I’ll have it again tomorrow.

My nights are usually spent reading or learning French, but I don’t have the drive to do extra work. It never seemed like work before; it was something to look forward to after my classes. It seems hunger has affected more than just my appetite. I go to bed earlier, pulling the covers around me as if they can help fill the emptiness in my stomach.

By day six, I’m craving pizza. I’m the kind of person who passes up the free pizza at a party, but now I keep imagining the crunch of a stuffed-crust pizza between my teeth. In Eastway Café at the check-out counter, I find myself with a slice of pizza I wouldn’t be able to afford if this was my life. But it’s not my life. Living in poverty means you can’t just decide to stop. It’s not as simple as just throwing your hands up and saying you’re tired of being hungry. Hunger starts to own you, so much so you spend all of your time planning where your next meal will come from instead of planning a future. And hunger is a very real problem in our own community, even if we don’t see it.
According to the 2014 UNICEF report “Children of the Recession: The impact of the economic crisis on child well-being in rich countries,” child poverty increased in 34 states between 2006 and 2011. Ohio ranked 25th on the list for state poverty rates. I put the pizza back. If there are people living like this every day, I can handle it for a few more days.

On day nine, I tear off the top of the box of mac and cheese like it’s a present I’d been told to wait for Christmas Eve to open. I’d wanted to save this until I really needed it, and I guess I’ve finally reached that point. I was never particularly fond of the packets of powdered cheese before, but when I pour it over my pasta it seems oddly beautiful. I end up breaking open the other box, forcing myself to save some leftovers for the last day.

I suppose I should feel satisfied at making it this long on so little food, but I feel more dispirited than anything. Food insecurity isn’t a game or a challenge; it’s a real problem deserving of real answers. Anne Marie Noble, director of emergency outreach services at the Portage County Hunger Task Force, says 15.6 percent of Portage County’s population, or 25,530 individuals, are food insecure. Additionally, 24.4 percent of children, or 8,030 individuals, don’t know where their next meal will come from.

We might think we are invincible and will never become one of these statistics, but it is not a distant situation.

“Most of us could be a paycheck or an illness away from being food insecure,” says Campus Kitchen adviser Ann Gosky. “We have stereotypes about people who go to food pantries, but it can really happen to anyone at anytime.”

The Portage County Hunger Task Force is a collection of 14 food pantries in the area, ranging from Aurora to Brimfield and everywhere in between. They work together to create meals for the community on a regular basis. The Y-Bridge program in Akron alone serves 350 people each week, about 17,000 per year. These 14 pantries don’t include churches, which also provide weekly meals.

THE SITUATION

On Saturday, I volunteer at the Loaves and Fishes food pantry at the First United Methodist Church in Ravenna. They’ve been serving a meal every Saturday for the past 11 years, including holidays. It’s a simple, white-walled room with long folding tables and mismatched chairs, but it has a greater purpose. Chicken enchilada soup sits in a crockpot on the counter along with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and warm thermoses of coffee and tea. Bags filled with personal hygiene products like toilet paper and toothpaste line a shelf for pantry visitors to take home. Ten minutes until lunch is served, and the tables are already filled.

The kitchen is alive with the slam of pots and pans. I wash dishes and look out at the people in line for a hot meal. They are not stereotypes or mistakes. They are the people I walk past every day, and I’m just now beginning to understand what it’s like to stand with them. When the pantry organizer announces that the meal is ready, everyone is alert with anticipation. I hang my dish cloth on the sink and step in the back of the line with the other volunteers. I grab a tray, gently placing a sandwich, soup and salad on it like they’re something precious. They are precious.

I sit down with the first real hot meal I’ve had in days, eating it much faster than I’d like to admit. The woman next to me brings her two elementary-school-aged grandchildren to eat. The youngest can barely see over the table. The eldest child is wearing a Troy Polamalu jersey. I talk with another volunteer and she says every time the little boy comes to the food pantry, he’s wearing a different football jersey.

“Is football your favorite sport?” I ask him.

“I don’t play. I just watch,” he says, making a cracker island in the middle of his soup.

When I ask him why he doesn’t want to play, he just shrugs and adds another cracker to the pile. I can’t help but want to picture him somewhere else than this room. I want to pick him up and transport him to the safe place of my imagination.

I hope one day he has the courage to venture onto the field. I hope he never has to worry about being hungry and not having anything in his refrigerator. I hope that one day he can leave his hunger on the sidelines.
Okay, Cupid
My Experimental Life as an Online Dater

When I took on four of the roughly 30 million profiles on OkCupid, a popular, free dating website, I didn’t expect people to reply with such immediacy.

words by Kelly Powell | photos by Jana Life | illustrations by Gina Leone

This message made its way into my OkCupid inbox just 10 minutes after creating a profile. Within the next week, I had 267 views, 372 “likes” and 43 messages. And that was only on one of my four profiles.

Don’t panic. I won’t be on the next episode of “Catfish.” I don’t recreationally online date between classes or on the weekends. The original purpose of these multiple personalities was to experiment with the age-old stereotypes that engulf our society. However, taking things into the digital age proved to perpetuate them further than I ever intended.

The idea was simple: I would rummage through my own closet, buy some clothes at Goodwill that fit the archetypes, get a friend to take some pictures of me on and around campus, and finally, set up a few profiles on a free dating site. I would bulk the pages up with some biographies, and then sit back and wait to see if anyone would send me a message.
"Wow ok you are honestly the prettiest girl I have seen by far gabby . oh I'm 23 by the way don't know why it says 26 haha”

I jumped away from my screen a bit. I hadn’t even been Gabby Olson for a minute, and already, guys were using emojis usually reserved for messaging about “chilling” and changing their ages for me.

The character he was referring to was a girl who, according to her bio, lived in San Francisco, put running over everything else and studied exercise performance. She sported a side ponytail, a tank top with “HIKE” screened onto it, athletic shorts and running sneakers. All it took was putting on the clothes I wear to my one-credit-hour Zumba class and whipping up a fake past about my glory days in cross country, and a full inbox was born. Overnight, on Gabby’s profile alone, I received 91 views, 163 “likes” and 15 long-winded messages from guys claiming to adore running, wanting to know how my weekend was going and asking me, without any introduction, to spend time with them.

“You’re awesome! Let’s get coffee and go listen to vinyls? I love my vinyl player more than my ps4, and you have to understand I love my ps4,” an OkCupid user wrote.

I decided to take a hands-off approach and let their responses to my minor information do the talking. After logging out as Gabby, I crafted three other Gmail accounts to accompany the three additional profiles I was experimenting with.
Hi, I’m Jacqueline! There’s nowhere else I’d rather be than in a coffee shop or a record store :) Currently studying graphic design at the Ohio State University. Looking for someone who will adventure, take pictures, and bike with me!

WHAT I’M DOING WITH MY LIFE
I’m in my junior year of college, so my life right now is basically just studying, working later hours in the studio, and when I can, spending time with my friends, normally going downtown and spending time at Kafe Kerouak!

I’M REALLY GOOD AT
I’d like to think I’m really good at identifying music from the very beginning of a track, and I kinda like to brag about my Instagram sometimes.

FAVORITE BOOKS, MOVIES, SHOWS, MUSIC, AND FOOD
Books: Perks of Being a Wallflower, No One Belongs Here More Than You
Movies: Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, anything by Wes Anderson
TV Shows: Portlandia, It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia
Music: The Decembrists, Fleet Foxes, Arcade Fire
Food: Sandwiches

JACQUELINE DAVIS
Profile number two was "jacdavis94," an ultra-hipster, coffee-guzzling, Fleet Foxes-listening aficionado. Just as with Gabby, the men who messaged Jacqueline completely conformed to her interests. "Hi Jacqueline! I'm sooper into photography and I tend to brag about my Instagram too, haha. You seem like a cool and funny gal. Maybe we can compare shots over coffee sometime? :)" a 21-year-old Columbus resident asked.

Good vibes and nature are all that matters to me; "Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared." —Buddha

WHAT I’M DOING WITH MY LIFE
I took two gap years to decide what path I wanted to take. I’m currently doing a lot of philanthropic work with Greenpeace and just living life!

I’M REALLY GOOD AT
I think I'm really good at accepting people for who they are. Your inner spirit is what is most important and I believe that I can see that in people :)

FAVORITE BOOKS, MOVIES, SHOWS, MUSIC, AND FOOD
Books: Brave New World, Walden
Movies: Yellow Submarine, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas
Shows: That 70’s Show, Cosmos
Music: The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix
Food: Subs, Arizona tea

BRIANA MCDOWELL
"Wanna help me center my chi?"
It made me start to wonder what the men of OkCupid would write to my third character, Briana McDowell. Pulling off this one was simple. I bought a quasi-drug rug at Goodwill, rolled my blue-stained jeans up, took my shoes off and donned a beanie. All it took was my attempt at a meditation pose by a tree and a quote by Buddha to establish my reputation on OkCupid as an activist/hippy/nature lover. Apparently that particular population is low on this site. Briana accumulated the least messages whenever I would log in to get a count. Compared to the other girls who were just as much “me” as she was, she would average about 1/3 of every number they would receive.
Hey, I’m Katie! I study fashion merchandising at Kent State University, and I’m really involved with my sorority. Trying to soak up every last minute of my time here!

WHAT I’M DOING WITH MY LIFE
I work heavily with our sorority’s philanthropy, the Painted Turtle camp, and I’m looking to work for a fashion magazine in the near future!

I’M REALLY GOOD AT
I would say that I’m really good at organizing events. My sorority recently appointed me to the events coordinator position, which is a huge blessing!

FAVORITE BOOKS, MOVIES, SHOWS, MUSIC, AND FOOD
Books: The Fault in Our Stars
Movies: Titanic, The Notebook
Shows: One Tree Hill, Pretty Little Liars
Music: Taylor Swift, The Weeknd
Food: Chipotle, Munchies

“Listen, I know these pictures can’t be yours. Can you at least get me the models name so I can try to convince her to dinner?”

And then there was Katie—my attempt at the profile of a slightly preppy, fittingly philanthropic sorority girl. I did a quick outfit change into a Kent State T-shirt, my black skirt and some bright pink lipstick. Even with the lipstick, my appearance didn’t transform that much compared to the other profiles. Yet without fail, it was Katie’s profile that got exceedingly more attention than the rest of them.

“So I was on the phone just now while I was driving and a cop came and pulled me over. When he asked me what I was doing on my phone while driving I showed him your profile. He smiled and told me that he’s giving me a warning and that I better get your number :),” one OkCupid user wrote.

It was as if by typing in eight letters, s-o-r-o-r-i-t-y, I was being pursued by more men than I would’ve been if I would’ve left that out.

“IT SCARED ME HOW QUICK THESE MEN WERE.
IT SCARED ME HOW QUICK OKCUPID WAS.”
At this point, I started to question what attracted so many people to these 21-year-old, Ohio-residing (with the exception of Gabby), monogamous-relationship-seeking individuals. It was the same person, but these men had no way of knowing that. I began to wonder what their thought process was when deciding to hit “send.” Their messages on every profile ranged from friendly to more than friendly. But what did I expect from someone whose username mentioned his love for the ladies?

I know this experiment was meant to analyze stereotypes, but instead, it brought about a different “S” word: scare. It scared me how quick these men were. It scared me how quick OkCupid was. It scared me how quick I was to come up with these characters’ interests, general information and “type.” What’s stopping anyone else from doing the exact same thing? And the most astounding thing? Even when I didn’t reply to these men, they wouldn’t cease to double-message me, sometimes with days in between.

When, “besides your looks, what are your three best qualities?” didn’t work, one user followed it up with another attempt. “Hey! How about a run!” he asked. Had these people become invested in me? Or maybe they were contacting me again as I was part of their own experiment? I wondered for a minute if I wasn’t the only one who was conducting some test of humanity by creating profiles that didn’t reflect who I truly was.

My expectations of this activity were entirely shattered—what I thought would result in a discrimination of at least one stereotype ended up being what some people would view as a total flattery fest. Not one user was rude to me. Every one of them essentially perpetuated the main reputation a free online dating site could gain: young men and women who just want someone to connect with. Whether that is as a friend, friend with benefits, or a significant other is up to them, but it simply boils down to humanity’s cry for acceptance.

You know, I thought about making another account. I thought about dressing up as a medieval-loving, purple-lipstick wearing, League-of-Legends-playing woman wizard. I would write excessively about my love for the “Eragon” series, fortune telling and “Once Upon a Time.” Maybe this person would bring me the dirt I was expecting—men judging this girl differently, giving me shocking responses and displaying to me the true, face-value nature of humanity. Maybe this person would confirm what I thought would happen with all of the other personalities that I created. Minus Briana, every girl got a considerable amount of attention, maybe because of their supposed normalcy. Maybe this girl could add some shock value to my online dating saga, which, so far, had been kind of stagnant.

However, I decided against it. Because someone would fall for her too. Someone would find her before she even finished filling out the pre-quiz after sign up. Someone would send her emojis and one-liners and corny compliments. Just like athletic Gabby, hipster Jacqueline, hippy Briana and preppy Katie, medieval Claudia would find her place.

“How’s your sunny Monday going? :)” Pretty good, OkCupid triple-messenger. What about yourself?”

“SOMEONE WOULD FALL FOR HER, TOO”
It’s lunch time in the Hub and students flock to the different units to get food. Bagels from Einstein’s, pizza from The Slice and pretzels from Auntie Anne’s. After students purchase and eat what they like, they head out and toss the leftovers in the nearest black trash bin. Into the trash goes food like Subway sandwiches with three bites taken out of it and rice bowls from Wow Bao that look like they haven’t even been touched. No one seems to give a second glance to that half-eaten bagel pitched into the trash or the unfinished mac and cheese left at the bottom of the bowl as it disappears on the conveyor belt at Eastway, back to who knows where. In the end, it’s just a little grub. Right?

Each year, the United States wastes $162 billion on food. Forty percent of food produced in the U.S. ends up in a landfill, which adds up to about 60 million tons of wasted food a year, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Kent State is no exception to the food waste problem. The university’s trash is still filled with burrito carcasses and pizza remains thrown away by students and dining locations across campus.

“I feel like college students waste a lot in general,” says Sophia Sorboro, a 18-year-old environmental conservation major, who is also a part of the Environmental Conservation Group on campus. “[People] don’t think about everything they’re throwing away.”

WHY DO WE WASTE?

It’s easy to point fingers as to who creates all this waste, but the problem is equally spread between all stages of our food, including the pre-consumer side, or dining locations that make the food, and the post-consumer side, which is made up of students, faculty and visitors who buy the food.

“In our Dining Services area, we’re always looking for ways to help trim cost and be responsible for product and removal costs, as well as looking at ways to cut down on food waste,” says Tim Wright, the assistant director of Dining Services and Culinary Operations.

Wright, who has worked in Dining Services for three years, says in order to help supplement the idea of cutting down waste, this past summer, Dining Services held knife training sessions for cooks and chefs on campus. The goal was to reduce excess food being thrown away in the kitchen and teach food handling techniques during prep.

“We’re looking at the cost of the product and the cost of removal,” Wright says. “We’re buying it, so we don’t want to waste it and throw it away. We want to use as much as we can.”

He also says Kent State’s “a la carte” type meal plan was created to help prevent waste and let students pay for each individual item. Traditionally, he says, other schools have meal plans in place that have an “all you can eat” aspect to it where students pay a flat rate per meal swipe.

“On traditional plans, students will actually add more to their plate even if they don’t end up eating it, in order for them to feel like they’re getting value out of the swipe,” Wright says. “Here at Kent State, since students pay per item, they will hopefully just be buying what they need.”
Once this food leaves the kitchen, though, there’s not much Dining Services can do about waste that accumulates after students purchase the food. While some customers pay with cash or credit, a popular payment method on campus is meal plan, which students believe may be their downfall when creating excess food waste. Many students who use meal plan to purchase their food refer to their meal plan as “Monopoly money” and spend their food dollars in ways that would make one think they are colorful, worthless paper bills.

“I definitely think students waste meal plan,” says Amanda Atkinson, a 19-year-old digital media production major. “I know that I’m guilty of it myself a lot of times. Even the smallest meal plan is way too much for me, so I always end up buying more than I need and throwing most of it out just so I feel like I used my meal plan.”

Spencer Gelle, a 19-year-old business management major, agrees he also uses his meal plan as a sort of “Monopoly money” and has witnessed friends wasting money and food carelessly.

Gelle says that his friends will go into the markets on campus, grab a bag of Cheetos off the shelf and buy it with their meal plan. He says they’ll eat one handful of the cheesy, dust-covered snack, say it’s lame and then chuck the perfectly good food in the trash.

“So because there’s no real economic incentive for them to save money and eat all their food, they’re just going to be all willy-nilly with it and waste away,” Gelle says.

Other students who agree their meal plan is simply “Monopoly money” also feel like portion sizes are misjudged a lot, and they will receive far too much food or far too little food for the price they pay.

**AT WHAT COST**

Each year, Dining Services budgets thousands of dollars for each of its dining locations on campus to invest in food for students. Kent State allows each location to spend the following:

- Eastway Cafe—$477,392
- Kent Market 1 & 2—$ 1,012,022 (this includes catering, because they operate out of the same kitchen)
- The Hub—$ 895,427
- Rosie’s—$821,106
- Prentice—$391,499
- Quaker Steak—$448,316

This totals $4,045,762 spent on food each year.

Food is expensive, but so is throwing it away. What students might not realize is not only are they paying for the food, but after they throw that food away, Kent State’s trash is sent to either Glenwillow Landfill in Cuyahoga County, which is about 19 miles away from Kent State or The Countywide Landfill in Stark County, which is about 43 miles from campus. Between these two locations, that half-eaten sandwich that was thrown in the trash travels an average of 31 miles directly to a landfill from campus before it meets its final resting place. The more waste the campus generates, the more it’s going to cost both the students and university just to remove the trash.

Not only does this create a negative economical impact, but it also creates a negative environmental one.

“When food goes into a landfill there are several negative effects; the food breaking down in a landfill contributes to methane production, a potent greenhouse gas and also takes up landfill space,” says Melanie Knowles, the sustainability manager of Kent State. “It is a waste of the energy and the resources that went into growing, harvesting, shipping and preparing that food.”

According to the EPA, it’s estimated that in 2011, landfill methane accounted for 103 million metric tonnes of carbon equivalent released into the atmosphere.

Methane gas is so potent that over a 20 year period, one ton of methane causes 72 times more warming than one ton of carbon dioxide. With methane creating that much of a problem for our atmosphere, the EPA has developed a food recovery hierarchy to help show where this wasted food should be going instead.

**STUDENTS DON’T NECESSARILY THINK ABOUT THE FOOD WASTE THEY PRODUCE BY THROWING AWAY HALF-EATEN MEALS.**
“The first strategy should be to reduce food waste; food that is produced should be used first to feed hungry people,” Knowles says. “The next level of the hierarchy is feeding animals. The next level, which is industrial uses, includes energy production via anaerobic digestion, a strategy that has been growing in Ohio. After that is composting, and at the bottom, is landfilling.”

THE AFTERLIFE OF FOOD LEFT UNEATEN AND UNUSED

The good news is there is a life after the kitchen for some of the unused food created at Dining Services locations on campus. Instead of going right into the trash, still-good food can be donated to programs at Kent State, such as Campus Kitchen.

The Campus Kitchen project is a national organization that provides meals to those in need with the help of student volunteers from individual college campuses. Each week, the kitchen provides meals for more than 300 individuals in need who are serviced through Kent Social Services, Center of Hope, Upper Room Ministries and Springtime of Hope. Through this program, any unused food on campus has the prospect of being utilized to supplement prepared meals for those in need.

“If Campus Kitchen can’t take it, each of the units have a list of about four or five other places that they can donate food to that we ask first if they want it, but other local organizations can pick up things, too,” Wright says.

Wright also says Dining Services is looking into donating some of the unused food waste to local pork farmers. After meeting with a representative of the National Pork Producers Council, Wright learned pig farmers aren’t slopping pigs traditionally with garbage and food waste like they used to.

“Farmers are actually taking care about what they feed their pigs nowadays,” Wright says. “It’s something I’m looking into in order to find someone local to take our trim and scrap that they would consider edible to use for a pig farm.”

RECYCLING WASTE AND CLOSING THE CIRCLE

Currently, there are only two options when throwing away food: a recycling bin that allows items such as plastic bottles and metal cans, and a regular old trash bin for everything else. What if there was another way to separate our food waste from the rest of our trash that can’t be recycled? There is, and it’s called composting.

Composting can come in many different forms, but a system that is starting to pop up on college campuses across the nation, such as The Ohio State University, is the new offering of a third waste receptacle specifically made to put food waste in, so it can then be taken to the proper facility or composting station. With recycling, trash and composting bins available, universities such as The Ohio State University have been working toward zero waste and have been successful in keeping more than 86 percent of waste generated from large events, such as football games, out of the landfills. Now, Dining Services have begun looking into composting from both a pre-consumer and post-consumer perspective.

“We’re always looking for ways to improve, and composting is one of the things that we’ve discussed in meetings,” Wright says. “It’s something that we’re looking into without a doubt, coming up with the ideas, figuring it out how we’re going to roll it out on campus.”

Composting could drastically cut down on the amount of food waste Kent State generates, but Dining services is currently looking at another option that would eliminate food waste before it was even created.
At the start of this year, Kent Market 2 introduced a new waste tracking system called LeanPath. The system works by having the employees of Kent Market 2 weigh each wasted item with the LeanPath tracker, which, in addition to the weight, also records the type of food and the reason why it is being thrown away. After the process, it takes a snapshot of the item being discarded and sends all the data in a report to the management.

Scott Hager, the senior Kent Markets manager, is responsible for advocating the LeanPath system to be brought to Kent State.

“I was aware of LeanPath and have worked with it in the past on previous accounts, which is what gave me the idea of bringing it here to Kent,” Hager says.

Hager, who is also in a food sustainability group, says he had used the LeanPath system while working at the University of Maine, and it worked it to track food waste and ways to reduce it. He says sustainability is something he personally advocates and is something he picked up on early in his career that he feels passionate about.

Each week the program is in place, Hager will receive a weekly report detailing the week’s waste and trends in the data.

“We’re at the point where we’re just collecting data to see where our issues lie and where we can improve, whether it be staff training or different processes or procedures,” Hager says.

The LeanPath system will be in a trial period until December this year, at that point, Dining Services will evaluate it to see if the system is something they want to roll out campus wide to help employees and management track waste.

“Once we evaluate it, we’ll measure what we’re using and measure what were throwing away, and hopefully create a plan to lessen the amount that we are not using and find ways to utilize them,” Wright says. “As a chef and kitchen manager, that’s our job to utilize every portion of what we have and keep more of it out of the trash.”

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Reducing food waste on campus isn’t going to be an overnight happening but with the efforts of those in charge of dining on campus, as well as the population of Kent State, changes can be made to reduce food waste and raise awareness of the issue.

Kent State needs more education, Hager says, and people need to be aware of this screaming issue. Improvement through the recycling bins is a place to start.

“It’s just an overall need to educate everyone from faculty, students, to visitors on the campus about what they’re throwing away and what they can do about it,” Hager says.
THE ESPLANADE

From the university to the city
Keith Wisdom: Abstract

Keith Wisdom is not a native to Northeast Ohio, though he has found wonderful experiences here. Wisdom is originally from Nassau, Bahamas, and he takes pride in his heritage, which he expresses in many of his paintings.

Wisdom’s first show was this fall in the Uumbaji Art Gallery in Oscar Ritchie Hall. Titled “In Color,” the exhibit featured abstract paintings that each displayed a different theme or hidden message.

Junkanoo, a large celebration in the Bahamas featuring street parades, music, dancing and costumes, was expressed throughout many of his paintings. This cultural celebration shone through his use of color and texture.

When Wisdom paints, he listens to jazz. His father was a well-known jazz musician, and the music has played a large role in Wisdom’s paintings.

Now that Wisdom has completed his first show, he is ready to move onto to his next big project. He is unsure exactly what this project will entail, but he knows he wants it to make a bold statement.

Wisdom’s goal for his exhibits is to have the most interesting and strange people view his work and give their opinions. “Everyone sees something different, that is what makes this so enjoyable.”
Wisdom, the executive director of AALANA at Kent State, works on a new painting in his studio, located in Oscar Ritchie. This painting is exciting for him because he’s never done anything like it before. He says every brushstroke has a purpose.

Wisdom converses with a woman who wandered into the show. He explains his work and the thought process behind his art.
Wisdom sits and reflects on his accomplishments as his show comes to an end. Wisdom was not sad, but grateful for this opportunity. “I am feeling very open and inviting of things to come,” he says. He was already talking about his next big idea for his next series of artwork.

Uumbaji Art Gallery, located in Oscar Ritchie, features Wisdom’s show, “In Color.” Wisdom recently began his journey as a painter, which took many of his friends and colleagues by surprise.
Christopher Darling: Commercial

words by Gina Leone | photos by Eslah Attar

From drawing during church as a child to preparing to show paintings in Madrid, illustrator Christopher Darling’s work philosophy has kept true to some wise words from his father: “You should just do what you want.”

Darling’s undergrad in fine art and creative writing led him to his first illustration job, drawing weekly for A.M. Todd, a flavoring company in his hometown of Kalamazoo, Michigan. This sparked his interest in commercial art and led him to apply to the School of Visual Arts in New York City to pursue a master’s degree in Illustration as Visual Essay. SVA accepts 10 men and 10 women each year, and Christopher would be one of those 20 students.

After graduating, Darling freelanced for various advertising agencies and other companies in New York City, as well as teaching design and illustration at Queens College. He was attracted to teaching because the community-centered environment energized and surrounded him with an abundance of ideas. Darling says he draws inspiration from his surroundings, culture, nature, movies and dreams.

“I like dreams because they’re weird,” he says. “And I think weird stuff is more interesting.”
Along with his colleagues, Darling co-founded Carrier Pigeon—a magazine that features illustration, fine art and literature. When asked why he chose illustration, Darling sarcastically responded, “Because I’m probably not good at anything else.” On a more serious note, he says he enjoys the kind of people he is surrounded by in the creative field.

Comparing commercial and personal, Darling says his commercial work is about design and creating something that best suits the client’s needs. His personal work is about doing what he wants. “If I like it, I’m happy,” he says. He describes the challenges of being an illustrator as the typical anxieties of any creative job—critique, especially—as well as the loneliness that comes with working alone.
Darling’s latest work is a mural he completed this past summer. He was driving around Cleveland looking for the perfect wall—he found it on the side of a halfway house in East Cleveland. A group of men from the halfway house actually ended up helping Darling with the production phase, along with his wife, brother and some friends.

In 2013, Darling and his wife, Elaine, left the Big Apple and moved to Kent, Ohio, when he was offered an assistant professor position at the School of Visual Communication Design. In his illustration classes, he emphasizes the importance of storytelling. “It’s more interesting,” he says. “You learn something from stories. The stories are important.”
THE STATE

Branching out of Kent, Ohio
This is the End

The zombie craze leaves Americans with a fear of impending doom.

words by Hannah Armenta | illustration by E. Vallas
Sixty. That’s the number of times the world should have ended in our lifetime.

In 1996, Sheldan Nidle, a California psychic, predicted the world would end on Dec. 17, when 16 million spaceships and a host of angels would come to Earth and destroy it.

There was Y2K, where the world was supposed to end in 2000. A simple tick of the clock would spring us into disaster and chaos instead of a New Year.

The most notable recent apocalypse prediction came from the Mayan Calendar, when the Earth would be obliterated by a fictional planet, Nibiru.

A “Brief History of the Apocalypse” cites these and other apocalypse predictions throughout time that demonstrate our constant need to predict the end of the world.

At any point in time, there is a prophesied cataclysmic event waiting for us just around the corner. Will it happen? Probably not—at least not within the foreseeable future.

In 2012, Reuters conducted a poll and found one out of every seven adults believed the world would end in their lifetime. People below the age of 35 were also more likely to believe in apocalyptic events, as well as people who have lower education and income.

In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention launched a campaign to educate people on public health awareness in the face of a major disaster, i.e. the apocalypse.

“Tat the time the campaign was launched in May 2011, zombies were huge in popular culture and enabled us to garner more attention on the topic of public health preparedness,” says Jason McDonald, spokesman for the CDC. “We used them as a metaphor for serious events like floods, hurricanes, infectious disease outbreaks and other disasters that people don’t typically talk about until it’s too late.”

McDonald says using zombies as its focus helped it gain the attention of a younger audience and those who were bitten by zombiomania.

Historically, zombies were the product of voodoo originating in Haiti in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

According to Live Science, Haitian zombies were people brought back from the dead, who were controlled through magical means like voodoo by bokors or houngan—voodoo priestesses.

Zombification was said to be used as punishment. Zombies would work as slaves on plantations or farms.

In 1980, a scientist named Wade Davis claimed he had found a neurotoxin called tetrodotoxin that could poison victims into a zombie-like state, Live Science says. It was the first hint zombies could be an actual possibility.

It took time for zombies to evolve into the flesh-eating ones we have today, however.

Bitters, walkers, geeks, roamers: These are only a few of the names used to describe zombies in AMC’s hit television show, “The Walking Dead.” Since its inception in 2010, the show has grown to have a cult-like following as zombiomania infected the nation.

Shows like “The Walking Dead” only perpetuate the belief a zombie apocalypse is imminent, but they have some truth to them.

Traci West, a part-time journalism professor at Kent State, says it directly correlates to what is going on in the world at that particular time.

“I think in difficult times we always go to that route because it’s a safe way for us to be able to deal with our fears,” she says.

Western also contributes our fear to political and social injustices. Racism, homophobia and a love affair with guns are some of the biggest factors, West says.

Those, along with our fear of getting sick or dying, is what makes it so easy for us to believe a zombie apocalypse is on its way. We are filling our ever present void. That one question everyone wants to know, but is too afraid to ask: When and how will I die?

While under the influence, a Florida man Rudy Eugene, attacked Ronald Poppo in Miami. Eugene began devouring Poppo’s face in public. It took five shots by police officers to finally kill Eugene. Poppo survived, but the world saw firsthand what a zombie apocalypse might look like.

The amount of post-apocalyptic shows or movies has more than tripled since 2000. Ironically, the amount of apocalyptic predictions also began increasing per year starting in the late 1990s.

But why have we only recently become obsessed with the idea of a zombie apocalypse breaking out? Perhaps it stems from our inherent fear of getting sick. We have seen how quickly viral infections like Ebola, SARS and H1N1 can spread.

Ebola made its way from West Africa to Kent State University last fall when a nurse who cared for Thomas Eric Duncan, a doctor who contracted Ebola, visited her family in the area, three of whom work at Kent State.

News quickly spread through campus like a virus and speculation grew. There were reports of students being infected with Ebola, along with portions of Kent State being quarantined. Twitter quickly blew up with students voicing their concerns or joking about being infected.

In 2012, we saw other zombie-like creatures popping up all over the news when several people started doing bath salts, a form of synthetic cocaine that causes paranoia and hallucinations.

While under the influence, a Florida man Rudy Eugene, attacked Ronald Poppo in Miami. Eugene began devouring Poppo’s face in public. It took five shots by police officers to finally kill Eugene. Poppo survived, but the world saw firsthand what a zombie apocalypse might look like.

We can’t predict our future. We can only wait. Maybe it’s zombies, maybe it’s Nibiru, but one thing is for sure: Constantly fearing the end of the world has already turned us into the walking dead.

FALL 2015
In a common field, 40 granite panels stand together in an undulating line of peaceful turbulence. Like the men and women they represent, each smooth white surface etched with a name creates a line of hope, honor and heroism. At the end hangs a gate crafted from the hemlock trees in a once-burnt grove at the edge of the field.

This is a place of memories, once a secluded hillside in the midst of western Pennsylvania.

Long gone is the gravel path leading to chain-link fence memorials. A paved path now winds its way past brown brush, evergreens and wildflowers until it crests one final hill. Atop the summit stands an elegant, curved white structure. A black walkway marked with timestamped events leads visitors through time and pierces the structure, ending abruptly at an overhanging outlook.

It’s a slice of blue skies and angelic white clouds that stretches to the horizons above the Laurel Highlands and beyond.

It’s the last view passengers aboard Flight 93 would have seen before crashing into the hemlock grove near the edge of the hillside.

Morrie Wiener walks along the Wall of Names at the Flight 93 Memorial with his son, Michael Wiener, telling him stories of the names he recognizes. He talks about how they met and what they were like.

"It has a very emotional impact," Morrie says about the memorial. "To go through the site is more than inspiring. It is very emotional and very well done, and I have nothing but praise for everything that has been done there."

Morrie visited the Flight 93 Memorial to pay his respects, knowing it easily could have been him flying the plane 14 years ago. The 74-year-old retired pilot wore his old uniform, his gleaming gold captains wings proudly displayed above his heart. In 2001, he retired from United Airlines after 17 years of service, only 10 days before 9/11.

Though he no longer feels the anticipation of a 767s wheels lifting off the ground as the plane takes flight, Morrie remembers 9/11 in a unique way.

Currently living in New Jersey, Morrie retired from United Airlines after his 60th birthday, in August of 2001, because Federal Aviation Administration law at the time required him to do so.

Each month he received a packet from United Airlines with a detailed assignment list for the next month. Morrie enjoyed flightpath 93, which flew from Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey to San Francisco. Though he wasn’t usually assigned this journey, he often picked up the flight for another pilot based in Connecticut who didn’t
like the commute to New Jersey.

“He says, 'I've got this trip on the 11th that I'm going to drop, and I know you always pick up those trips that go to San Fran out of Newark,'” Morrie says. “I said, ‘I'm retiring officially on the first,’ and we talked a bit and hung up.”

After that pilot successfully dropped the flight, another pilot, Captain Jason Dahl, picked it up. Based out of Denver, Dahl traded for the Flight 93 trip so he could take his wife to London for their fifth anniversary the following weekend.

Dahl and First Officer LeRoy Homer, Jr. were in control of the aircraft when four members of the al-Qaeda terrorist group took control of the plane and redirected it toward Washington, D.C. It is widely believed the U.S. Capitol building was the intended target that day. The plane never reached the Capitol, crashing in Shanksville, Pennsylvania at 10:02 a.m.

Morrie fought back emotion as he spoke of the events of 9/11 and the friends he lost. He steadied his voice, pausing at times to collect his thoughts.

Morrie recalled working on photography that day, completely oblivious to the tragedy taking place as he worked. His work was interrupted when he received a phone call from his son who informed him a plane had crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center.

Michael, a 1995 graduate of Kent State University, says after he saw the plane crash into the towers, he needed to be reassured his father hadn't picked up the flight to San Francisco.

“He had just retired, and my father has a way of doing what he wants,” Michael says. “If he wanted to fly he would have found a way.”

Morrie seemed surprised by the phone call from his son, thinking where else would he be if he was answering the telephone in his house. It was then Michael told his dad about what happened in New York City.

Rushing to turn on the news, he recalls that shock took over as he watched the smoke billow from the skyscraper. He couldn't take his eyes away from the TV, immersed in the nightmare-like events unfolding.

“At the time, no one was able to identify what those planes were, where they had come from, what airlines they were, and I immediately went to the fire department to report in,” Morrie remembers.

He called the FAA, where he was set to work as a flight crash inspector following retirement as a commercial pilot, to find out more information about the crash in New York. Questions ran through his head as he dialed the number.

“They told me not to come in, that they weren't sure what was happening, and they would be in contact with me,” Morrie says.

Morrie then went to the Cherry Hill Fire Department, where he had worked as a part-time firefighter since 1984. The men began preparing for the trip to New York where they would help with the rescue mission at Ground Zero. The original plan had been to organize three teams of firefighters, with each team working in the city for three days before switching off.

“IT WAS PRETTY TOUGH WHEN WE STARTED TO REALIZE ALL THE PEOPLE THAT HAD BEEN LOST.”

—MICHAEL HORROCKS

“I was part of the third team,” Morrie says. “As it turned out the team that went up stayed for seven days and did not rotate out of there, so I didn't go up with them.”

It was while he was at the fire station that he learned the identity of one of the planes that had struck the World Trade Center. United Airlines Flight 175, piloted by Captain Victor Saracini had struck the South Tower at exactly 9:03 a.m.

“Vic was a local guy from this area, he grew up in Atlantic City. Michael Horrocks was the co-pilot, and his aunt worked with my wife as a teacher in Stratford, New Jersey,” he says from his New Jersey home. “It was pretty tough when we started to realize all the people that had been lost.”

He heard rumors of an explosion at the Pentagon and a plane crash in western Pennsylvania. The crash in western Pennsylvania was different than those in New York and D.C., which made the initial connection difficult to comprehend.

“I don't remember when I became aware that A, it was a United airplane and B, that it was that flight, and the flight that I would have been on,” Morrie says. “That didn't hit me until much later.”

Considering flights 175 and 11 had both been flown into the World Trade Center, a crash in rural Pennsylvania didn't seem to fit together at first. In the coming days, details about Flight 93 would emerge, including possible intended targets and the heroic actions of those on board attempting to regain control of the aircraft from the terrorists.

It would be several days before he would realize his connection to the plane that crashed in a field near Shanksville. Morrie says he does not remember the actual moment he learned just how closely he was connected to the flight. It's the overwhelming feeling of anguish he remembers. The anguish he felt as he realized, had he not retired, it could have been him flying as captain.

“There was such turmoil, and rumors were coming from many different sources—some credible and some that were unbelievable and couldn't be,” Morrie says.

When he learned Flight 93 crashed during an attempt to regain control of the airplane, he says he felt a sense of tragedy and pride in their attempt. Passengers aboard fought back against the terrorists.

“The motto that has been attached to 9/11 especially in the fire department and almost everywhere else is never forget, and that's what I want people to remember,” he says.

Morrie knew Captain Dahl from the training center in Denver. But it wasn't just the captain. He also knew First Officer Homer and every flight attendant that was aboard Flight 93.

“It really became pretty devastating,” Morrie says. “I don't think anything differently than anyone else who thought about it in this country. The feeling of the tragedy there, and the pride
that we were able to try and do something.”

It wasn’t just airline friends he lost, either. Morrie says he knew several people who worked in the New York fire department.

“**TIME DOESN’T MAKE IT ANY LESS OF A PROBLEM.**”

—MICHAEL HORROCKS

“I lost 26 really good friends up there in the fire department,” he says. “Guys I had worked with and trained with—especially a lot of the guys in two of the rescue unites, Rescue 2 and Rescue 4.”

With the loss of so many friends and colleagues, he began to feel a deep sense of guilt commonly referred to as survivor’s guilt. Morrie felt happy to be alive, but that feeling was clouded by sadness for those lost in the tragedy. For almost eight years he struggled before he sought professional counseling.

“It was a two-fold trauma,” Morrie says. “I’m still dealing with it. It took at least that long to get some control.”

Knowing so many people in both the airline industry and the fire department who died on 9/11 didn’t help with managing his guilt, either.

At no time did Morrie let those feelings show, Michael says, nor did his father tell him he was seeking help. He reacted like every other American did in the days following the terrorist attacks—with sadness and a sense of American pride.

“Everybody in the country felt something, but out here (in Ohio) it all went away,” Michael says. “Time doesn’t make it any less of a problem. It still affects me and my dad.”

Morrie, who now operates a freelance photo restoration studio called Images Limited, cannot stress enough the importance of preserving this piece of history and remembering the heroic actions of those involved during and after the tragedy.

“I think anybody could recognize that heroism,” he says. “Never forget about what has happened.”
Field of Honor

Like the lives of millions of Americans, an ordinary field near Shanksville was transformed on 9/11.

by Matthew Merchant

A common field one day. A field of honor forever,” is etched on a glass section of the visitor center outlook at the Flight 93 National Memorial in Stoystown, Pennsylvania. At the base of hill, a boulder marks the spot where the plane crashed. The main walls of the Flight 93 National Memorial are textured to resemble Hemlock trees, a grove of which nearby is the site of the Flight 93 crash.

“This is the last bit of air space they would have seen before they crashed. This landscape, the rolling hills, this beautiful open sky,” says Adam Sheppard, a park ranger at the Flight 93 National Memorial, of the vista from the visitor center in reference to the Americans who attempted to take control of Flight 93 after terrorists hijacked the plane on September 11, 2001.
Each panel of granite in the Wall of Names is hewn from a different vein of stone and placed at different angle. From the visitor center, the waving effect of the panels symbolizes the turbulence of Flight 93 before crashing into a nearby hemlock grove.

At the end of the Wall of Names, a gate, crafted from the wood of nearby hemlock trees and notched with 40 diagonal lines representing the 40 passengers and crew members who died in the Flight 93 crash, guards the path to the crash site marked with a bolder, seen through the posts. The panel for Lauren Catuzzi Grandcolas is also inscribed with the the phrase “and unborn child,” illuminated in the rising sun.
the equalizer: empathy matters

words by Matthew Merchant

This is not an essay about race. This is not an essay about equality. This isn’t even an essay about race relations in the United States. This is an essay about empathy.

When the Washington Post published an article in April called “The most racist cities in America, according to Google,” the research revealed what appeared to be evidence that the northeast and deep southern part of the U.S. were the most racist. Using Google search data from several keywords, including variants of the “N-word,” researchers discovered clear links between areas searching for such terms with areas of higher black mortality rates. One was the Cleveland-Akron area, which includes Kent.

Not 20 minutes from Kent State’s main campus is Mantua, where some folk still utter the “N-word” and refer to African Americans as less than human; where Tea Party members tote gun rights like loving mothers show off baby photos; and where the color of one’s skin doesn’t matter because it was almost all white, with only a handful of black, Hispanic or Asian folks around.

According to demographics data, the town has a little more than 1,000 people, roughly 96 percent of which identify as white. The school district, which draws nearly 15,000 students from various areas, has similar demographics, with about 3 percent identifying as a race other than white. I am one of the majority. This is the town and education system in which I was raised.

In November 2014, after a grand jury in Ferguson, Missouri, chose not to indict Darren Wilson for the fatal shooting of Michael Brown, members of Black United Students gathered in the Nest to watch the news coverage. When the decision was announced, I could see the grief and pain, both physical and emotional, in the eyes of my fellow students. Never having experienced persecution or racism personally, I could not relate.

Empathy is looking at a situation and attempting to see the world from another’s perspective, from his or her personal history and culture. I grew up in a world where I didn’t have to empathize because everyone looked and acted like me. Everyone shared the same education system, the same teachers, rural culture, religious beliefs, work ethic and heritage.

In Thailand, there is a concept called “same-same,” meaning everyone and everything is physically and spiritually the same. There is a difference between finding similarities with those around you—being the same—and acknowledging the deeper connection—being same-same—amongst all humanity. Growing

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up, I didn’t know everyone was same-same. I was only concerned with my small slice of the world. The outside world was just that. The outside world. My narrow mindedness was ignorance, and ignorance was bliss.

Our nation, however, must not think in such an isolated, passive manner. Americans cannot remain unempathetic to the systemic problems of injustice facing millions of lives each day. Running the “N-word” and its variants through the Google Trends machine will provide the same results as that study produced. A clear link between racism and minority population death is revealed. However, on closer inspection, one might find the top search queries for “N-word” involve “N-word jokes” and “my N-word.” But the third? “N-word definition.”

Beneath what appears to be malignant racism is also curiosity and questioning. Regardless of which city in Ohio is the most racist, the perception of racial tension and deeper issues is evident. From a swastika painted on the Rock on front campus after a Black Lives Matter rally, to comments made on Yik Yak and more. Obvious signs are one thing, but it’s the microaggressions and lack of empathy and understanding on everyone’s part that allows racism to fester.

When videos show white cops attacking black people in the classroom, or making unwarranted arrests on the streets, we immediately take those images as complete truth. But do we stop to empathize with the individuals involved or look at context? By jumping to conclusions, we often fail to empathize. Those claiming All Lives Matter are accused of minimizing the issues facing the black community in America. But do they? Can someone not seek to understand those issues and the people—yes, the people—who face them and still recognize the greater elements of societal racism? Racism is a belief that one race is better than another. All lives do matter, but statistics and anecdotes reveal that black lives seem to matter less. Empathizing with people—seeking to understand their emotional and social lives—should be the first step toward addressing racial issues.

I cannot and will not justify community members of my hometown using the N-word, or their antiquated beliefs of subtle white supremacy, as small-town groupthink or an appeal to tradition fallacy. It is ignorance. Unjustifiable ignorance. That same ignorance flows through people on Kent State’s campus and across the nation. Issues raised in the Black Lives Matter movement—and how we as a nation answer questions of alleged systematic racism—have not been addressed properly because of ignorance. And ignorance is the primary roadblock to empathy.

We are all same-same, but different. Recognizing that is the first step toward conquering ignorance. It’s the first step toward empathy and peace.
On a bright fall day, sunlight seeps softly through the foggy windows of an empty room in Molly Stark Mental Hospital in Canton, Ohio. Abandoned in the early ’90s, the hospital was left for nature to slowly wear away at the interior and exterior of the building. The hospital itself echoes designs that could have been used on a grand mansion; beautiful Spanish-esque brick arches offer support, and elaborate pillars and expansive balconies surround the tan ivy-wrapped building. Inside, the hallways are still and silent. The smell of old wood and decaying material fills every inch of each of the floors. Littered with peeled paint, dust and other debris, the hospital will sit, patiently waiting until the day comes when its beauty is demolished once and for all.
NATIONAL AWARDS

2014 ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION STUDENT MAGAZINE CONTEST

FIRST PLACE
First-Person
Consumer Magazine Article
Christina Bucciere, “My Upright Life” (December 2013)

SECOND PLACE
First-Person
Consumer Magazine Article
Nick Shook, “Head Games” (May 2014)

ASSOCIATED COLLEGIATE PRESS 2014 DESIGN OF THE YEAR AWARD

SECOND PLACE
Yearbook/Magazine Page Spread
Rachel Mullenax, “Kent’s Flashiest Cocktails” (April 2014)

AEJMC STUDENT MAGAZINE CONTEST 2015

THIRD PLACE
Chrissy Suttles, “Two Seconds in Cudell”

HONORABLE MENTION
Chrissy Suttles, “Nightfall”

2015 NATIONAL COLLEGE MEDIA CONVENTION

SIXTH PLACE
Best of Show for a Feature Magazine

REGIONAL AWARDS

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS REGION 4 MARK OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

FINALIST
Feature Photography
Leah Klafczynski, “Unbreakable Bond” (May 2014)

FINALIST
Non-fiction Magazine Article
Carley Hull, “Don’t Sweat the Small Things” (May 2014)
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